"The Spectacle of the Suffering Body: Seventeenth-century Aesthetics of Violence"

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Abstract

This dissertation treats the aesthetics and ethics of theatrical violence, focusing on late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries in France. Tragedy took on the impossible task of presenting, to use Elaine Scarry's formulation, "world-destroying" pain, using a variety of stage techniques to absorb, amplify, and dissimulate violence. It managed a constant alternation between terror and its foreclosure. Suffering is impossible to represent, and yet it regularly informs the way in which individuals and the theater of state conceive of power, learning, and productive work. Throughout, I consider the ways in which these figure amplify or circumvent an aesthetics of confrontation between tyrant and rebel.

Daggers, bloody cloth, and female witnesses to violence absorbed, amplified, and dissimulated the strong affects associated with scenes of suffering bodies. In Chapter 1, I investigate how the weapon in plays such as *Didon se sacrifiant* (circa 1605), *Scédase* (circa 1610), and *Le Cid* (1637) absorb the affects and efficacy associated with sacrificial violence. These plays present violence as a compelling theatrical enactment that could spread itself like a contagion. Chapter 2 focuses on bloody cloth, which in *La mort d'Hercule* (1634), and *Cinna* (1639) both stands in for scenes of bodily suffering and facilitates a transformation from gore to glory. In Chapter 3 I study the shifting status of the witness to state violence by focusing on plays featuring female protagonists who survive brothers. In Garnier's *Antigone* (1580), Rotrou's 1637 play of the same name, Hardy's *Mariamne* (circa 1610) and Tristan l'Hermite's *La Marianne* (1637), sororal mourning increasingly masked suffering and violence.

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Introduction: *From Gore to Glory*

While secular tragedy in France from 1580 to 1630 underwent a profound transformation in its aesthetic of violence, the spectacle and concept of terror remained among its most important features. From Robert Garnier's 1580 *Antigone* to Pierre Corneille's 1641 *Cinna*, gory violence in these plays used the same motifs: daggers, bloody cloths, and female bystanders. Studying these motifs uncovers this generation of theater's relation to terror. Terror is a coercive mental force that shapes thought and is frequently indexed in theater featuring sublimated violence. Terror is the result of a collective societal effort to self-regulate. Made invisible by being transformed into glory, pain seems useful rather than arbitrary. This invisibility is a way to deny the individual body's vulnerability and the social body's contingent or arbitrary existence. In early modern society, the king's body represented the social body. Spectacles of terror gestured away from thoughts of the king's vulnerability by centering spectacles of violence on non-royal bodies and by truncating scenes of conflict and confrontation that revealed the precarity of royal power. This shifting away from the king's body impeded consideration of the king's vulnerability and the desirability or advantages of his murder. These shifts away from scenes of conflict and their truncations created what I call blind spots: places where beliefs appear unquestioned. This theater reinforced cultural blind spots about the nature and legitimacy of political authority.

We can further enrich our understanding of these tragedies and their relation to monarchy by focusing on how these plays thematized and redirected the terror of discontinuity by using the suffering body and its motifs as a kind of screen. Additionally, when we consider these plays as a larger body of literature, the rupture or aesthetic

change is remarkably consistent: all these secular tragedies deal with instrumentalized violence no matter how it was depicted. Instrumentalized violence is violence that is presented as useful, necessary, and inevitable. Instrumentalization legitimates the arbitrary and meaningless experience of pain within a codified ideological framework.

Even in the goriest tragedy, audiences were directed away from paying close attention to the physical, embodied experience of pain. Instead, pain, no matter how explicit, became a tool, which characters appeared to misrecognize as a source of agency. This misrecognition is similar to René Girard's understanding of how sacrificial violence works in that its social regulatory and other functions cannot be recognized as such for people to believe the ritual was successful (19). The audience, mirrored in characters onstage, had to believe that certain kinds of violence solved problems, when that violence in fact simply removed sacrificeable characters from the equation. Later, more decorous tragedies also mystified pain by presenting glorified bodies that denied the reality of suffering and the potential for social disorder that this violence precipitated. If we analyze these plays as cultural artifacts that normalized terror as they instrumentalized it, we see them as a series of performances where cultural blind spots are created. These blind spots cohered around personal agency under tyrannical rule.

In these plays, protagonists called for change, and attempted to make it by committing political, performative violence on their own bodies or on other non-royal bodies. However, these attempts were ultimately ineffectual, leaving social change to the power of the gods, or to an undetermined future justice. Early modern French audiences did not simply receive messages about violence's use value or the supposedly invulnerable body of the king. Terror was an effect, produced as a consequence of the

plays. The terror enacted on the spectator affirmed and furthered the inevitability of violence. Theater structures thought as opposed to reflecting or passively communicating social discourse. Theater is a medium as well as a cultural artifact. It is an instrument with which people are able to cope with and function in a traumatic, dysfunctional world by externalizing and instrumentalizing pain and allowing it to have meaning. Theater creates blind spots that allow the world to seem livable.

Histories of Violence

Theater contained violence throughout the medieval and early modern periods. Instead of a new theater for a new time, a violent medieval theatrical aesthetic continued to influence secular tragic drama. The early modern period was one of profound political and epistemic crisis, and violent theater served as the analogical substantiation for this crisis of belief. Compounding the violent religious conflicts between Catholic and Protestants culminating in the 1572 St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre were complex political allegiances, problems of succession, and a series of political assassinations. Ultimately, this conflict between king and nobles underpinned the French Wars of Religion, which, while frequently motivated by religion, were irreducible to it.[1] Much power was local at this time and not centralized geographically or consolidated politically. There were three main centers of power with many shifting alliances. First were increasingly radicalized Protestants who were protected by many prominent nobles, including Henri de Navarre, future king Henri IV and his more radical uncle, the Prince de Condé (Holt 39). The French Calvinist synod declared the latter "protector and

[1] For a stronger take on the importance of confessional identity as a catalyst for social upheaval, see Carroll, *Blood and violence* (264-72).

defender of the house and crown of France" (Holt 52). Such a title implies that the crown was threatened and required outside intervention and support. This language of crisis suffused many assertive political stances, which were couched in terms deferential to royal authority even when they openly defied it.

The second side in this continual conflict, the ultra-catholic faction, also frequently attempted to seize power in the name of royal authority. Comprising Catholics opposed to religious toleration, members of what became known as *La Sainte Ligue* held prominent positions at court and constantly put pressure on the French crown to expel Protestants from France or forcibly convert them (Holt 123, 132). Prominent nobles in this faction included Henri Duc de Guise, his brother Cardinal de Lorraine, and the Duc de Mayenne. In addition to the independent duchy of Lorraine, *La Sainte Ligue* enjoyed popular support in cities such as Paris, Rouen, Toulouse, and Lyon. Paris especially played a critical role both as a synecdoche of the kingdom of France and as a hotbed of ultra-catholic radicalism. Henri Duc de Guise was beloved by Parisians who supported him as future king. Over the course of this period, *La Sainte Ligue* would support Catholic pretenders to the throne, with the understanding that France, a Catholic country, could only have a Catholic king. The many colorful myths surrounding figures such as Catherine de Médicis, Marguerite de Valois, and King Henri III have sparked much critical debate among historians. Ultimately these allegations indicate how alienated the crown was from increasingly radicalized and paranoid factions. Though Henri III was one of the most politically marginalized of kings, he was constantly accused of being a tyrant, and numerous tracts were published with hallucinatory descriptions of his bloodthirsty depravity and rapaciousness (Bouteille-Meister 287-88; Biet, *Théâtres* 869-

70). This reputation had to do with being in power in uncertain times and attempting to be politically moderate during a time of extremism. That is to say, the royal policy of reconciliation and inclusion became retroactively synonymous with an act of aggression (Crouzet 10, 369-70). Royal festivities had the aim of harmonizing the disunity in the social body (McGowan 117-30). We can generalize and suggest that, in part, sixteenth-century tragedy also had this function, quite unlike that of the seventeenth century, making myriad explicit connections between the crisis of violence onstage and that on the streets.[2]

On August 23, 1572, the murder of the protestant Admiral Coligny set off a bloodbath known today as the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre. As many as 2,000 in Paris and outlying areas were murdered (Holt 88), and a series of similar massacres continued across France. On the evening of December 23, 1580, King Henri III had the powerful Duc de Guise and his brother the Cardinal de Lorraine assassinated, their bodies burned and their ashes dispersed to prevent their followers from making relics of their bodies (Holt 132). These two leaders of the ultra-catholic *Sainte Ligue* were purportedly in the process of overthrowing the unpopular king, and most scholars see the action as Henri III's last-ditch effort at regaining legitimacy. When news spread of the double assassination, waves of protest broke out, leading to Henri III's unsuccessful siege of Paris and his own death by assassination August 1, 1589, in the small city of Saint Cloud, outside Paris (Holt 135). Since Henri III died without issue, and his closest heir by blood, Henri de Navarre (the future Henri IV) was protestant, the civil war only worsened, leading to a second siege of Paris in 1590 in which hundreds Parisians died of starvation

[2] For an extensive treatment, see Frisch, "French Tragedy and the Civil Wars" (288-97) and Jondorf, *Robert Garnier and the Themes of Political Tragedy in the Sixteenth Century*.

(Holt 140). An uneasy peace slowly returned following Henri IV's conversion on July 25, 1593 (Knecht 269), and on April 13, 1598, the Édit de Nantes afforded liberty of conscience to Protestants within certain conditions (Knecht 279). Eleven years later, Henri IV himself was assassinated in Paris on May 14, 1610 (Knecht 283). An ensuing period of intermittent unrest followed between the young king Louis XIII and several rebellious nobles. This period is normally thought to be one of conflict between centralizing royal authority and nobles asserting local authority. The Guise made use of their local authority in Normandy during critical moments of the Wars of Religion (Carroll, *Noble Power*, 108, 145-47).

This state of affairs resulted in an epistemic crisis concerning how people understood the political world around them and in particular kingship itself. Contemporaneous with Henri III's assassination, the model of kingship moved from a mystical marriage of mutual obligation between king and people to political authority derived through continuity of bloodline (Merlin-Kajman 9). Kings in this setting fulfilled obligation by subsuming all personal desire to the well-being of the State (Merlin-Kajman 70). In this context, the King's will was, in its very foundation, supposed to be the expression of the public good. One of the major challenges to the ideology of absolutism was a lack of clarity about whether the king's will and the public good were indeed separated. This lack of certainty limited the possibility of redressive action. The Bourbon dynasty went to great lengths to curtail debates about violent action against tyrants. The Édit de Nantes directed that the previous forty years of violence, social disruption and political assassinations be treated as if they had not happened (Biet, *Théâtres* xxxvii). However, memories do not simply disappear. As Andrea Frisch argues

in “Montaigne and the Ethics of Memory,”

> Montaigne's view on this particular matter seems only to have hardened as the wars continued. He is unusually categorical in his negative assessment of the human potential to erase painful memories and retain pleasurable ones: ”Et cela est faux: *Est situm in nobis, ut et adversa quasi perpetua oblivione obruamus, et secunda jucunde et suaviter meminerimus*. Et cecy est vray: *Memini etiam quae nolo, oblivisci non possum quae volo*” (27-28)

Montaigne serves here as a particularly strong instance of a refusal to forget, one even more salient given his politically moderate stance.

Also, the sources of conflict, such as a lack of confidence in the political structure, remained at varying degrees of intensity throughout this period. Theater was a place in which collective trauma could be re-thought through performance and where trauma could ultimately be redirected in the sign systems of terror.

The sign systems of terror and their relation to collective trauma become apparent when one studies the continuity between late medieval and early modern theater. From the medieval period forward, mystery plays dealing with religious themes were popular in France. In the 1540s, this genre of plays had become spectacularly, outrageously violent. By the 1580s these plays had been largely banned. While the plays were banned in Paris, and performed increasingly rarely outside the capital, audiences still had a taste for violence. By the 1580s, there was a little space in artistic life for that taste for extraordinary violence to be developed. This space was where truly violent secular tragedies were given a space to fully develop. Finally, at the time these plays were

popularized, there was a strong impetus for French people to suppress the memories of religious violence that they had experienced. The intent was for society to go forward as if this profound violence had never existed at all.

This theater was heavily indebted to a medieval tradition of theater, though the implications for this continuity have not always been well explored. Not only did the *théâtre à compartiments* evolve from a medieval stage and notion of space, but graphically violent theater effects or "recipes" were one medieval tradition in use or at least known about since at least the 1630s (Howe 78-79). These objects and spaces were recycled at the theater space of the *Hôtel de Bourgogne*, which rented out both its theater space, props, and decor to the itinerant theater troupes that performed there **(**Deierkauf-Holsboer 59-168). *L'Hôtel de Bourgogne* was a theater space where the *Confrérie de la Passion* used to put on passion plays. This organization had been putting on religious drama in various locations around Paris since the early fifteenth century (Deierkauf-Holsboer 16). Passion plays were extremely popular productions and *L'Hôtel de Bourgogne* in effect had a monopoly on all of the theater produced in Paris whether sacred or profane (Deierkauf-Holsboer 23). These plays were first restricted and then banned altogether in 1548, despite their sustained popular support. The reasons for this interdiction appear contested. According to Deierkauf-Holsboer, the theater came under increasing scrutiny because it diverted money that otherwise went to church coffers and charities, interrupted church service, and was excessively violent (28-29, 34-35). Passion plays at *l'Hôtel de Bourgogne* as well as elsewhere in France had become too worldly and spectacular, and were no longer viewed with appropriate religious devotion:

Ces pièces sacrées ne servaient autrefois qu'à illustrer la liturgie et les acteurs

> étaient des prêtres uniquement préoccupés de leur mission religieuse. Le publique assistait avec vénération et dévotion. Mais un autre état d'esprit s'était fait jour à la longue. Les Confrères se préoccupaient de moins en moins de religion, mais ils cherchaient surtout à offrir une grande réjouissance et un éclatant spectacle au peuple (29-30).

Spectacularity was at odds with religious devotion itself in these plays. While Deierkauf-Holsboer argues that passion plays as a genre simply obsolesced and were overtaken by an emergent, more attractive, and more engaging secular drama, her own work points to ways in which this tradition was a victim of Reform-era religious debates about appropriate religious devotion. Deierkauf-Holsboer demonstrates that critiques came from Catholics, Protestants, and contemporary scholars. Jody Enders reframes the discussion of several sixteenth-century sacred dramas around the impact of reformation-era hermeneutics. Early modern passion plays and their "miracles" became problematic because the danger that the audience would question theological miracles became too great:

> Long accustomed to suspending their disbelief, sixteenth-century spectators might now stand ready to suspend their belief – or to change their beliefs, or to lead different lives based on those beliefs. One thing was clear: Regardless of what they were seeing or hearing, mis-seeing or mis-hearing, it was dangerous when they believed what they saw, or what they *thought* they saw, or when they believed nothing at all. It was also dangerous when they *dis*believed what they saw or what they thought they saw, or when they disbelieved nothing at all (*Death by Drama* 161).

It was not spectacularity *per se* that posed a problem. Rather, interpretive problems emerged when a stable reading of the spectacle of violence could not be guaranteed. In this way, religious drama became too politicized during the contentious and unstable Wars of Religion.

Though historiography focuses on a shift between religious and secular, the continuity of aesthetics of suffering indicates that this is a distinction without a difference. In *Tragédies et récits de martyres en France (fin XVIe-début XVIIe siècle)*, Mathilde Bernard, Christian Biet, and Marie-Madeleine Fragonard investigate the political stakes of martyr drama during the Wars of Religion and posit that, because martyrs were victims of state violence, these plays glorified the contestation of power (35). There were a few short-lived vogues for religious drama in the seventeenth century. These plays were not passion plays at all, however, featuring a completely different, non-violent aesthetic. The notion of martyrdom became very widely interpreted and conflated the complicated realms of religion and politics. Protestants began recognizing their dead as martyrs while denigrating catholic martyrdom (Bernard et al. 38-39). The Catholic Church then started restricting who could be called a martyr or saint. After the Édit de Nantes, the naming and representing of martyrs of 1560-1590 was restricted (Bernard et al. 107). There were particular problems associated with martyr drama during this time of epistemic upheaval. First, the notion of a martyr was becoming banalized, which encouraged distance rather than identification (Bernard et al. 109). Overall, if religious drama could be viewed in the same way as secular drama, which, at this time, shared its aesthetic, then interpretation and debate could result (108). Bernard, Biet, and Fragonard's argument in *Tragédies et récits de martyres*, and Biet's related one in

Théâtre de la cruauté overstate the case for secular drama's power to challenge the spectator in all instances. However, the division between secular and religious drama, in which the latter came under increasing scrutiny, is borne out by the historical record. By the 1640's religious drama became the purview of Jesuit colleges, which exercised message-control (Bernard et al. 112). Ultimately these plays were unsuccessful because they reflected a political reality far too starkly even when they did not graphically stage violence.

Violent secular drama took over from violent passion plays and resembled them in several respects. First, the same kinds of props were used to effectuate similar violent stage effects. Many items might have been re-purposed from this earlier drama. After passion plays were banned in 1548, the *Confrérie de la Passion* continued to rent out its space for performances of secular tragedy. From *Le Mémoire de Mahelot*'s detailed accounts of plays' staging, props, and décor, we surmise a continued demand for graphic violence that took the same or a similar form as that of martyr drama. The suffering of a secular hero was less polarizing during this time period.

Secular tragedies emerged in a period wherein the cost of a peaceful society was to deny completely the reality of violence that individuals had experienced and that on a macro scale had effectively challenged the fallibility of kingship. Because they were indirect expressions through art, these tragedies could take on both the consequences of the violence and the problem of a supposedly absolute monarchy. The problem of the ideology of absolute monarchy is that it was never in fact absolute. Many plays of this period thematize the compromises necessary to legitimate and support secular authority. Many scholars have discussed the compromises in Corneille's *Cinna* and *Le Cid*, and a

smaller number have studied how authority in earlier plays such as *Scédase* is unequal to the task of dispensing justice. These plays give insight into the contingent and precarious nature of authority. However, they did not investigate the role of terror on the spectator to shape the discussions and debates onstage. The aesthetic of terror is constant throughout the period. The dramatic continuity we see in these secular tragedies shows that although the aesthetic was disrupted, the cultural preoccupation with extreme violence, the inability to address it directly, and the consequences of it, were always the same. And, crucially, the conclusions about it were never very satisfying for audiences.

By "aesthetic of terror" I mean that there was an ideology of the usefulness of pain that all of these plays, whether explicitly or implicitly violent, supported. The objects and figures close to bodies in pain formed a coherent sign system of trauma. We need to be canny readers of this pain, since characters often described it in terms of glory or empowerment. Apotheoses and glorious denials of pain were the pleasurable parts of nonviolent plays. While fantastical, they were clearly compelling ways in which violence denied the reality of pain. Denying the reality of pain also occurred in plays that were gory. Gore onstage was no more real than the stage objects and characters that indirectly evoked it. Instead, as in medieval drama, "the hyperreality that characterizes so many early performances proves a particularly successful means by which to create the idea that the combination of pleasure and pain is aesthetic and desirable" (Enders 167). While their proximity would suggest that these plays were deeply engaged with the ethics of inflicting pain, they created a seductive narrative that conveniently side stept hot-button issues such as tyrannicide. They rendered gore gloriously useful and thereby put the onus on lesser, eminently sacrifice-able figures to solve problems by being murder and suicide

victims.

Terror and Bodies in Pain: Instrumentalizing Suffering

Terror is a coercive mental force that preys upon deep-seated hidden anxieties. For Anthony Kubiak, terror is an existential fear of non-being, the absent presence of which is conjured by "phobic objects," a kind of ill-fitting patch that covers over the terror of non-being (113). For my purposes, this terror is the spectacle of tyrannicide and the social instability that may result. I am less invested in a psychoanalytic model than is Kubiak, but I find his model a useful way to understand how terrorizing spectacle works on the emotions through conjuring an absent presence of a terrorizing image and then deflecting violent potentiality onto a less controversial figure.

Terrorizing spectacle manifested itself in a series of less-challenging images that covered over and paradoxically revealed the terror of non-being through absent presence. Having activated deep-seated anxieties indirectly, terrorizing theater then presented alternative scenarios that superficially appeared to resolve the deep-seated conflicts in question and created blind spots that made otherwise acceptable choices unthinkable. Terrorizing spectacle made certain kinds of violence on certain sacrificial victims just, divine, and necessary. Doing so convinced people to accept options they might not have if their emotions were not worked upon so powerfully.

Terrorizing spectacle conceals violence and truncates scenes of conflict. These plays flirt with presenting instances of potential tyrannicide in all their terrorizing efficacy, but then redirect that terror onto a neighboring individual. These other figures

were sacrificeable because it was too terrible to contemplate killing kings, or at least it was the one thing that was not presented. The process by which violence becomes just and divine and the reality of pain is elided is called instrumentalization. This process works in theater when the plot shows vignettes of potentially terrorizing images and then curtails them, replacing them with alternative violent conclusions. In early modern tragedy, objects and characters onstage showed this terrorizing pain and transformed it into terrorizing glory that denied the reality of pain.

There is much about these plays and their aesthetic that cannot be reduced to historical context. Secular tragedy could not address the causes of social upheaval in part because, as many scholars such as Christian Biet and Hélène Merlin-Kajman have observed, there were political pressures as work in the form of the Édit de Nantes that diverted attention away from a direct discussion of contemporary events. However, more globally, terror and suffering are limit experiences that cannot be discussed or even experienced without mediation. Terror, like pain, is always deferred and deflected into representation, even though their relationship to representation is fraught and antagonistic. Furthermore, the predominance of gore in the theatrical aesthetic of the time cannot simply be reduced to collective social trauma. Instead, suffering is inherently spectacular and has been recognized as such in all historical periods since Aristotle identified it as the preeminent locus of tragedy (21). Scholars have differed on whether the power of this spectacle has a coercive or a liberating effect, but there has been no question about its centrality and impact.

Theater scholars of Aristotle have long investigated the role of scenes of suffering in tragedy. They frequently identify the ways in which terror is inherently a mediated

experience, one that often seeks to justify violence. According to Girard and Kubiak, watching the suffering of others is cathartic because the individual in question is a kind of a scapegoat or symbolic substitute. Girard's *La Violence et le sacré* identifies Aristotle's theater as one of several mechanisms of social stabilization alongside sacrificial rituals (402-03). Witnessing Oedipus' suffering onstage was a kind of substitute for human sacrifice:

> L'Œdipe tragique ne fait qu'un, on l'a vu, avec l'antique *katharma*. Au lieu de substituer à la violence collective originelle un temple et un autel sur lequel on immolera réellement une victime, on a maintenant un théâtre et une scène sur laquelle le destin de ce *katharma*, mimée par un acteur, *purgera* les spectateurs de leurs *passions*, provoquera une nouvelle catharsis individuelle et collective, salutaire, elle aussi, pour la communauté (403)

Witnessing bodily suffering was cathartic for the audience because it was a symbolic substitution for the imminent threat of violence the audience would have collectively felt. It communicated affect back to the audience, but in a way that was attenuated and externalized in an appropriately sacrificial figure. In this model, theater manages the limit-experience of terror by channeling terror and reflecting it back on the audience in a sanitized form.

Girard's analysis suggests how the spectacle of suffering acts as a symbolic substitute for a collective, unacknowledged source of terror. Extending these observations, Anthony Kubiak posits that theater produces phobic objects that help individuals avoid confronting the ultimate terror, which is that of non-being:

> Perception is absolutely infused by terror – a confrontation with the imminence of

> a non-being that defines life. Pain and death and madness are "feelingly perceived" in the terrorizing play of human thought itself… In the institutionalized theater (the inevitable end of all performance), within the reverberations of theater's relation to the law in tragedy, the terror of non-being is ultimately crystalized as the threat of terrorism – an objectification of terror in the ideology of the violent image (16)

Terror is therefore objectless, but the mind is constantly in search of a phobic object to cover its lack of being (22). For Kubiak, theater displaces terror by repressing it into the sign systems of terrorism:

> Terror, then, and in a different sense, catharsis, are neither objective nor subjective phenomena, but are instead the manifestation of a fundamental and violent expulsion or disappearance of the subject and his pain into another locus – either the repressive Other or the Real. The intensity of this disappearance produces a loss of identity: the collapse of the subject/object into a third term, an Unnamable (19).

Aristotelian theater, in Kubiak's formulation, justifies or naturalizes the suffering of its protagonists, endorsing it by reference to just, exterior, or divine law (19). This is a kind of instrumentalization of terror. It occurs when the violent nature of the law becomes naturalized, or when theater represses the relation between violence in theater and the law:

> When the relation between terror and its implementation in the images of terrorism is repressed – when it is dislocated into the image systems of spectacle, it often displaces cultural terror and terror's pain into strategies of information until terror and its isms become formalized, objectified, and gradually neutralized

into concealed ideologies, “hegemonies,” or mere patterns of thought. (9)

Structures of information and coercive ideologies are both instrumentalizing forces; they naturalize the terror these systems create. They create or reinforce cultural blind spots that render violence unquestionable or self-evident.

In many ways, the depiction of physical pain shares several of the same relationships to representation as terror. They are both inherently mediated experiences that are inimical to representation. And the instrumentalization of physical pain is a component of the ideology of torture. As Elaine Scarry has observed in *The Body in Pain*, putting pain into language involves a level of objectification and thus distancing from the body. It is the very nature of pain to destroy representation. The language of pain, if it can exist, is bound up with the visceral reality of the body and the contiguous or analogous objects that figure or cause its pain (4, 56). Following Scarry, I identify the scenes in which extreme physical pain shatters language. For Scarry, pain is objectless, having no external referent in the world. She studies the ways in which pain resists language while acknowledging the many contexts in which people use language to describe, objectify, and communicate pain (5-7). Language and nonverbal communication constantly reemerge to figure and distort extreme pain. Scarry understands this phenomenon in the context of torture and propaganda, but many of the plays I study blurred the line between torturer and victim. In some cases, this phenomenon resulted in a kind of indistinction that facilitates sacrificial crises, particularly in plays that featured vignettes from epics on internecine violence such as the Iliad, the Odyssey, the myths of Oedipus, and many others. In other cases, this indistinction was a necessary function of suicidal rhetoric because in these cases the torturer and victim were the same person. Scarry observes this

connection, but sees it as a natural part of the cognition of pain instead of the result of acculturation (53). In all of these plays featuring suicide, this blurred line was a result of the ideology of pain, which fed into the terrorizing belief that individuals were powerless in the face of divinely ordained or fated events. The depersonalization of agency makes choice disappear and violence appears as an external force acting on various individuals.

For Scarry, acute physical pain destroys representation. Physical pain cannot be shared or properly articulated, only approximated through analogy with objects that inflict pain. For instance, pain is *stabbing*, or *like* a knife (16). Moreover, we most often attribute pain *to* the weapon, and ultimately we cannot conceptualize pain without an external, visible referent. Putting pain into language in this way objectifies it and creates a kind of distancing effect that can ultimately deny the reality of pain, dissimulating it into the language of power in the case of torture or propaganda (28, 56, 66). Ultimately, weapons onstage in these plays were compelling because they had a dual and contrary function. They presented both the aggression of the murderer and the vulnerability and pain of the victim. This dichotomy was present even when the murderer and victim were the same person, as in the case of suicide. Suicide, at least the protracted and intentionally painful methods used in these plays, seems to fly in the face of a major precept in Scarry's work, that is, that to acknowledge the reality of pain is to be compelled to act, to intervene (57). If one inflicts pain on one's self, how can one not acknowledge the reality of that pain? In these plays, characters often stab themselves several times. Shouldn't they, following Scarry's argument, stop themselves? Instead these characters convinced themselves to torture themselves to death, wholly wrapped up in the logic of torture and denying or instrumentalizing their pain. The way in which this happens is that characters

distanced themselves from their own bodies. They became their own torturer. As Scarry argues:

> All of those ways in which the torturer dramatizes his opposition to and distance from the prisoner are ways of dramatizing his distance from the body. The most radical act of distancing resides in his disclaiming of the other's hurt (57).

In *Pyrame et Thisbé* especially, but also many other plays of this period, murderous characters used the language of torture, even when they killed themselves. As I will explore in depth in a later section, these characters falsely see weapons as a means of achieving agency, taking tardy or absent divine intervention in their own hands. They frequently do so by placing their deaths in a terrorizing narrative that makes death necessary, just, and divinely ordained. Pyrame desperately wishes for the gods to kill him, and his suicide allows him to retain the belief that his death is just and necessary in a world seemingly bereft of justice and divine intervention. In Rotrou's *Antigone*, Hémon, in committing suicide, is able to place his death within a larger narrative that will include that of his father's. He does so while skirting a critically important line, not actively seeking revenge for his death but strongly suggesting the gods may kill the tyrant Créon. Relatedly, but as a more extreme example, Thisbé entirely attributes this agency to the weapon she brandishes. In all of these cases, the characters reject the real experience of pain in favor of an instrumentalizing one. This false stoic bravura conceals the real lesson of pain: agency within a tyrannical system is always a hopeless proposition. If we understand Scarry's argument about the rhetoric of weapons as they obscure the victim's pain, we can extend it to an analysis of how the violence inflected by weapons solidifies and naturalizes the individual's place within a flawed social order.

Reading Violence

When scholars of seventeenth-century theater deal with terror directly, their observations concur with those of Kubiak about the ways in which theater becomes terroristic when it represses the relationship between itself and terror. The same may be said of contemporary theorists living in the seventeenth century. John Lyons in *Kingdom of Disorder* posits that seventeenth-century theorists and dramaturges sought to instrumentalize terror. Terror, or properly contextualized horror, was a way to distance the audience from the immediacy of the scene of pain. Terror provoked a kind of mental imitation or translation of the scene onstage. Terror also forced the audience to think in terms of their future deaths when they saw "beautiful" deaths onstage.

> In contrast to the *généreux* spectacles of murder and suicide, which offer models of noble conduct, horror overwhelms the pity and terror that are based on what we would call identification. Horror paralyzes the beholders, making *transis*. It seems that horrible spectacles appeal solely to our sense of the present rather than permitting the mental imitation of beautiful murders in which we project them into our own first-person future. The playwright's challenge is not so much to eliminate horror from tragedy as to place it at an appropriate remove in order to temper horror's precedence over the other emotions (64).

These deaths onstage seemed to be phobic objects that covered over and stood for the subject's death. Terror is exteriorized in this phobic object because it is pushed to the future and projected onto another individual. For La Mesnardière, terror is an aversion tactic meant to correct unruly emotions such as incest. As long as horrifying violence is

properly contextualized and presented as a "repentir plein de justice" (207), it terrorizes as a phobic object that makes death just, divine and fated. Through identification, the audience was meant to see a connection between unruly passions onstage and in his or her own heart. For Lyons, instrumentalized terror in theater had general moralizing purposes, and in this regard his work dovetails with Emmanuelle Hénin's observations about how theorists and dramaturges justified seventeenth-century theater's existence with recourse to didacticism ("Plaisir des larmes" 290). This body of work that Lyons and Hénin draw from tells us how dramaturges and theorists might have seen their own work, and what qualities they thought it ought to have. At the same time, this kind of investigation has to be supplemented with broader analyses of theater and its relation to terror as it would have manifested for individuals at the time. To investigate the connection between terror and theater further, it is necessary to evaluate contemporary phobic objects and theater's relation to them.

Violence done to and by kings was a major phobic object throughout the early modern period. Though terror *per se* is often a secondary consideration in seventeenth-century scholarship, several scholars posit that terror structured thought and active forgetting about the Valois political model, the trauma of religious wars, and complications or contradictions of ideologies of Bourbon dynastic continuity. There was all manner of suffering bodies in these plays, and all of them, royal and non-royal alike, managed and foreclosed terror. The encounter between tyrant and unruly subject was fraught with concealed terror in these plays and frequently featured many instances of violent motifs that managed the encounter with terror. Theatergoers were not supposed to believe that they could assassinate tyrants. Refocusing attention on sacrificeable

individuals and the specious empowerment suffering afforded them helped maintain this conceptual blind spot. It also clearly demonstrated the fatal cost of even the most indirect political engagement.

The stability of the Bourbon model of kingship was presented as an uninterrupted line from Saint Louis to Louis XIV. However, this ideology of continuity covered over both the many detours and impasses that complicated this bloodline as well as the dire political threats that religious wars, assassinations, and political coups posed to standing kings. When heredity was the prime criteria for kingship, the repercussions of assassination were exponentially greater.

The study of kingship comes from French adaptations of Ernst Kantorowicz's theory of *The King's Two Bodies*, an analysis of English medieval and Renaissance law concerning a legal fiction that separated a king's private or natural body from his political function. Jean-Marie Apostolidès most notably adapted these concepts to a French early modern context. The king is sacrificed because his role had a foundational religious function that evolved during the *ancien régime* (14, 22). Implicitly, kings were sacrificed onstage. This analysis does not interrogate the impact of terror that sacrifice implies because Apostolidès is dealing with royalist ideologies of power, not the ways in which they covered over or exploited anxieties about power's failure.

Hélène Merlin-Kajman, following Apostolidès's reading of Koselleck, interprets how theater helped to structure a split between public duty and private beliefs (Apostolidès 28-29; Merlin-Kajman 8). She shifts her work away from kingship proper to the many ways in which absolutist society maintained a foundational division between private and public (16). Though she thus focuses away from theater, terror, and kingship

per se, Merlin-Kajman's analysis is the most compelling when it investigates how terror structured thought and memory. These instances occur when she analyzes the rejection of Valois political and social models, as is the case of her reading of *La Marianne*.

More recent scholarship has re-focused on kingship but not terror. For instance, Hélène Bilis explores moments of crisis of succession in *ancien régime* tragedy, many featuring terrorizing images that created blind spots. Bilis does not engage with terror directly, but it is implied in her reading of *Crisante*. This play dramatizes the problems inherent in overextension of a centralizing authority, and as such is a meditation on absolutism and its potential fragility (*Passing on* 50-51, 53). The play also shows the empire solidified and Corinth subjugated when Rome is able to guarantee the rule of law (*Passing on* 57). The play ends with the sacrifice of the Corinthian king and the eponymous queen, characters who figured resistance but who demonstrate the superior moral authority of Roman law properly executed (60). Not only does the play violently purge itself of the figures that figure absolutism's flaws and liabilities, but it makes these deaths seem fated and necessary. For Bilis, the Corinthian king's lack of succession epitomizes his lack of success, and his melancholy is comic alongside an image of Rome which, beset by problems of overextension, is still presented as successful.

Bilis's work frequently studies instances wherein two models of kingship are imbricated, allowing the success of one and the failure of the other to show in stark relief. Together, they create a narrative that implies a causal relationship. Though she does not investigate the aftermath of Valois dynastic troubles or focus on sovereignty under Louis XIII, hers is a useful model for how such a narrative operated in other plays, and the ways in which terror structured and ordered this narrative.

The Valois failure to succeed fit into an overarching narrative of Bourbon succession, and scholars have frequently used this context to analyze the nuances of how the representation of kingly bodies functions. We see this approach to a limited degree in Merlin-Kajman's work, and it appears frequently in scholarship focusing on the turn of the sixteenth century. As elsewhere, theater's relation to terror is implied in this body of work. It is this treatment of terror, rather than kingship exclusively, that makes this work compelling and connects it to larger theoretical issues such as the undergirding ideologies of pain.

The scholar whose work exemplifies this phenomenon is Christian Biet. In his *Théâtres de la cruauté*, he reprises theories of sovereignty as they related to sacrifice, positing that these turn-of-the-sixteenth-century plays put sovereignty on trial or even executed it (xl, xlii). Contrary to Apostolidès's analysis, here being executed is not a sacralizing act but one which problematized the notion and possibility of kingship. Biet's thesis fits into a larger conception of early modern theater's relation to law that he elaborated in earlier works such as *Œdipe en monarchie*. His work also has brought to light many understudied plays from a critically overlooked period, connecting them to larger themes in scholarship such as the king's two bodies, the Édit de Nantes, and an emerging public sphere. However, Biet's reading depends on a division between plays that obviously endorsed monarchic values and those that obviously did not. The divide between royalist and nonaffiliated plays could be productively problematized if the focus were placed on how terror structured blind spots. If the non-royalist plays Biet analyzes might be said to encourage debate (xxxiii), they do so only within certain limits. Biet cogently studies how plays that clearly endorsed a royalist agenda also activated terror

about the fragility of peace during the early years of Henri IV's reign and the problem of political discontinuity and precarity that Henri III's assassination provoked. Doing so, they created a narrative about the comparative viability of the Bourbon dynasty. These plays can be read in light of Bilis' formulation of success/succession. Though Bilis focuses on a later period, she proposes a model of reading *ancien régime* plays in which crises of succession worked to undo or decompose a stable notion of monarchical continuity (*Passing on* 14-16). In its place, competing models of kingship emerged in these moments of crisis. Imbricating two distinct models allowed for a seductive narrative of continuity, or discontinuity, to emerge. So, in Biet's pro-monarchical plays, assassination discredited Valois kings in order to make Bourbon kings, and thus the Bourbon model of kingship, look good in comparison. In non-affiliated plays, sacrifice was an alternative to tyrannicide. It was not a competing political model of social regulation but a system of collective social regulation that predated modern political systems. Both royalist and non-royalist plays appeared to execute symbolically an outmoded political structure, but both did so in the interest of solidifying the reign of sitting kings and removing the agents most likely to effectuate change.

For Biet, the play *Cléophon*, about the assassination of Henri III, was part of a larger effort to restore the royal image and validate the Bourbon dynasty after the death of the last Valois king (881). The play shows the martyrdom of the last king and celebrates the new monarchy. The coded names make the play more like a mystery play with predestined characters that make the meaning of death clear (885). The king in the play is ripe for assassination; he is unwilling to quash rebellion, and his inaction, coupled with that of his wife, signifies the couple's sterility (886).

The king dies onstage but the play ends with a description of how he designated Henri IV as his successor. The play became a celebration of a new golden age and justified Henri IV's accession (887). This play subsumed this onstage death into a panegyric of Henri IV. A necessary death, or one that needed to happen, inaugurated a different formulation of kingship. Henri IV incarnated a modern understanding of kingship that was legitimated through bloodline. He could effectively quell rebellion because he did not have a mystical connection to his people (889). The only problem was that since the king's political and natural bodies were the same thing, the stakes of his assassination were higher.

In contrast, in the 1612 play about Henri IV's assassination, he could not be stabbed or die onstage because in this model of kingship sovereignty is in his blood. To shed it onstage would be a symbolic putting to death of this model of kingship (948-49). These plays activated terror about the fragility of peace and the problem of political discontinuity. The trauma of Henri III's death became a kind of martyr sacrifice to validate Henri IV. And Henri IV's death, in order to fit into this triumphalist Bourbon narrative, could not be shown. Violence here was a way to reject a previous model of kingship. It was terrorizing because it seems just and divinely ordained. This terror was instrumentalized to make Henri IV's reign seem more fated and auspicious. It was also a way to terrorize the spectator into rejecting the Valois political model, since it too was presented as something that was fated to die.

If we understand how terror worked in these royalist plays, we can see what elements they had in common with the other plays Biet studies. Biet considers plays such as *Cléophon* as the exception to the rule. In plays that did not explicitly endorse royalist

ideologies, he considers moments in which sovereignty is "executed" or put on trial in theater. These plays created exceptional, even hyperbolic situations in order to invite interpretations concerning the legitimacy of power (XL). Moreover, tragedy raised the veil that covers how power works and whether legitimacy is possible. Plays such as *Scédase* executed the notion of just state justice (XLII).

For Biet, non-royalist plays consistently encouraged conversations and debates. He often cites moments in which this drama appeared to invite or figure discussion. At the same time, the glimpse into the inner workings of the legal system that this kind of play was able to offer was highly limited. In these plays, characters without legal authority were constantly confronted with their own inability to act. These plays subtly wove a narrative of powerlessness that made suicide rather than opposition the only viable option, one that seemed fated to happen. When compared with the glimpses into the legal system that later plays would afford (Bilis, "Corneille's *Cinna*" 83) this earlier generation of drama was more explicit and interposed fewer interpretive limits. However, not all discussions of all topics were equally possible. Though these earlier plays in many respects had fewer aesthetic constraints, they were remarkably consistent when it came to the narrow range of possible ways to address the problem of tyranny.

When Biet observes that Scédase's suicide was a symbolic attack on the legitimacy of sovereignty *(Théâtres* 340-41), he underemphasizes how these plays naturalized suicide and despair as the only conceivable means of addressing the problem of tyranny. When violence was done to nonroyal bodies, it created terror that structured blind spots about sovereignty. In subsequent chapters, I will present a more consistent focus on this phenomenon in order to extend and nuance Biet's observations about how

theater of this time actively rejected the Valois political model.

Biet's analysis has an unexpected corollary in medieval theater historiography. Jody Enders' work on late medieval and early renaissance drama in *The Medieval Theater of Cruelty* studies the implications of a deep connection between judicial torture and theater. For Enders, stage violence, as well as forensic rhetoric, had its own coercive force, despite the ways in which it was presented as an antidote to violence. Witnessing judicial punishment, on- and offstage, reinforced and naturalized a cultural belief that pain revealed truth, thus further endorsing the spectacle of punishment as a source of reality (166). This theater was coercive despite its manifold similarities to Biet's corpus of secular drama, which he presents as non-coercive. In revealing the truth of legal authority's insufficiencies, these plays also masked the ways in which sacrificial violence detached from kings and authority figures and attached to rebellious individuals. The latters' deaths are presented as necessary and fated just when there was an untenable confrontation with a king that usually features many accusations of tyranny.

The theory of the king's two bodies as it is applied in France suggests a necessary differentiation between Valois and Bourbon dynastic self-representation and treats the impact that catastrophic violence had on the notion of kingship. According to this theory, until Henri III's death in 1589, the political model of kingship involved a mystical "marriage" that linked the king and nation in mutual obligation. Henri III relied on this mystical notion of kingship to support his increasingly unpopular reign. Mystical kingship was too malleable a concept to help build consensus (Merlin-Kajman 13). It was frequently the *ligueurs* who advocated in favor of this model, using it to solidify their critiques of sovereign power (Mercier 316). The Bourbon dynasty emphasized Salic law

and bloodline (Merlin-Kajman 9-10). Louis XIII's funeral was the first to have no effigy, and the focus shifted away from his dead body, as in previous royal funerals, and toward the living body of his son (Merlin-Kajman 133). Absolutism redirected reference away from the fragile body.

The political structure of absolutism refocused attention away from the definition of the kingdom as being mystically connected. Under absolutism, there was an active rejection of the Valois political model. Instead of integration and inclusion, the absolutist model reified a division between public obligation and private belief (Apostolidès 28-29; Merlin-Kajman 14, 19). Theater actively managed this division both by presenting horrifying images of the Valois political model and by staging plays whose crises hinged on a conflation of obligation and desire (Merlin-Kajman 23). This conflation was a way to understand the far-reaching effects of tyrannical authority.

While contemporary accounts of Henri III's assassination varied from martyr-inspired loyalist descriptions to gory *ligueur* hyperbole (Mercier 320-22), Bourbon royalists described only the transition to power from one monarch to the other (Mercier 317, 329). Later, the Valois model reemerged in plays such as *La Marianne*, wherein the eponymous character's relationship to her brother signified an impossible and fatal desire for unity and sameness that the play rejects (Merlin-Kajman 23). These plays actively rejected the model of the king's two body, using terror to do so.

The terror these suffering bodies elicited was a terror about instrumentalized pain and its disconnection from the body. More specifically and concretely, a king's murdered body elicited a specific kind of terror related to fears about continuity and stability. Often, gory images disappeared and were replaced by glorified ones that denied the vulnerability

of the body. Scholars such as Biet have studied this dichotomy in plays that feature glorious Bourbon kings taking over from failed, murdered Valois ones. Another way in which anxieties were managed was by deflecting potential violence onto accusers rather than tyrants. In both of these kinds of depictions, the image of suffering was channeled in a way that disconnected it from the body, making suffering seem right, divinely ordained, and just.

Some terrorizing images of bodily suffering were graphically violent suicides or homicides that took place onstage; others were instead more decorous, absorbing physical suffering into an image of glory. Frequently these terrorizing images came to the fore in instances that reinforced what I call an ideology of torture. I use this term as a way to analyze an ideology or structure of thought that underpinned the many individual instances and repeated motifs of violence I identify and study in these plays. The nature and limits of monarchic authority constituted another level of ideology that informed terrorizing images in early modern French drama.

Important historical shifts occurred in this period concerning the status of kingship, ultimately shaping the limits of theatrical representation even during periods when there were few external aesthetic constraints. Not only was regicide carefully managed and almost entirely excluded from the stage, but the motifs of violence I study frequently had a large role in maintaining this exclusion, redirecting attention away from tyrannical rulers and onto their victims. This phenomenon made this violence on victims seem fated and divinely-inspired and placed all retribution and justice in the hands of the gods. In the infrequent instances where regicide was purported to have been carried out, the motifs of violence I study had a role in instrumentalizing the scene of violence, taking

attention away from the goriness of the royal body and turning its suffering into a glorified image that reinforced an ideology of monarchic continuity.

Not only was the series of assassinations and regicides demonstrably traumatic, but it had a profound effect on the definition of political legitimacy. One major source of terror is the implications of the interruption of continuity. The rare instances of regicide in the plays I study feature depictions of suffering kings that deny the reality of their suffering and the interruption of continuity their deaths suggested. Another source of terror were the implications of an absolute sovereign will in a king who confused the public good with his personal desires (Merlin-Kajman 16). Tyrannical rule was a frequent subject in seventeenth-century plays because it was a viable possibility (Apostolidès 200). It was also a critical blind spot that terrorizing images of bodily suffering helped to shape. These plays did not present subjects who could address the problem of tyranny directly and effectively. Tyrannicide was never presented as a viable option in these plays and in fact rarely occurred. Redressive action against tyrants in these plays was normally reduced to brief scenes, ineffective of confrontation. The representation of violence was further managed such that that no accusation could escalate into assassination by redirecting attention back onto the suffering body of the accuser. These plays continually suggested that there was no possible way to oppose a tyrant successfully, and that only by provoking execution or, more commonly, by committing suicide did subjects have any effective means of acting in response to tyrants. In all of these encounters an image of regicide was covered over by spectacular suicide and executions. These scenes made these actions appear fated, divinely inspired, and necessary. They also suggested that no possible action against tyrants could occur, and that the most one could hope for was

divine intervention. In many cases, this divine intervention was thought to occur as a direct result of spectacular suicide, at best a circuitous attempt at assassination and one that disassociated the future social actors involved from the divinely ordained action.

Whether on- or off-stage, the assassination of tyrants was particularly rare. There were other restrictions that managed the way in which tyrants were depicted onstage and the range of possible responses to them. Scenes of accusation were a limit for many plays, and these scenes themselves had many constraints that defined their scope and degree of controversy. Frequently, the accusers were in no position to carry out actual tyrannicide, and either they died immediately after their accusation or their deaths were implied. This sequencing redirected the imagination away from the possibility of assassination. Scenes of violence and their motifs further managed the depiction of tyrants, acting as what Kubiak would describe as phobic objects. Violent stage effects prevented spectators from concluding that they could kill tyrants.

Even though pre-classical theater had fewer constraints on it than later drama, it managed the impossible scene of violence in order to eliminate the possibility of assassination from the range of possible ways of addressing tyranny. Suicides or provoked executions implied that assassination was never a possibility. When regicide occurred or was strongly implied, these images redirected away from a realistic depiction of assassination and the gory interruption of political continuity this eventuality implied. All of these effects revealed a blind spot reinforced by terror.

Some scholars cite Aubignac's proscription of assassination out of deference to the sacrality of kings to explain the relatively infrequent depiction of assassination (Ekstein 113). However, regicide did occur occasionally onstage, most notably during the

period from 1634 to 1651 (Michel 115). It is telling that regicide was fairly infrequent in late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century drama, when this theater was otherwise graphically violent. As noted above, the rare instances of assassination onstage in this earlier period constituted an active rejection of Valois authority or a Valois political model, a kind of terrorism on the spectator that was cannily folded into later depictions of Bourbon dynastic continuity. Later drama whose aesthetics correlated with emerging guidelines about *bienséance* tended to divide the scene of the blow from its fatal effects, except for the first performances of *La mort de César*, which Scudéry retroactively made conform to *bienséance* by adding a curtain (118). The tyrant's death could also be implied through madness, or it could be accidental or offstage (Ekstein 122). In very few instances, the person accused of being a tyrant died, distancing the scene from the audience.

In the vast majority of instances, in plays from Garnier's *Antigone* to Rotrou's *Crisante*, the assassinations did not occur at all. Even putting a tyrant onstage was possible only when this staging was carefully managed in a variety of ways. The tyrant's crimes were frequently projected into the past or future, or they could be removed entirely (Ekstein 117-18). Seventeenth-century theater focused on usurper-tyrants almost exclusively and presented them with all the trappings of bad rulership, namely that they privileged their particular passions over the public good (Ekstein 112). This codified image came in several forms.

Some plays, largely those after 1630, projected the blame onto corrupt ministers, other ancillary figures or on a diffuse network of principal characters (Merlin-Kajman 30-31, 161-62, 166). Scenes of confrontation of tyrants managed the scene of tyranny. They

were rare, as well as controversial, because they were one step away from killing the tyrant. Ekstein argues that the accusation of tyranny gave legitimacy to opposition (125-26). Staging lengthy scenes of dissent destabilized or delegitimized the kings accused of tyranny by suggesting that the nature of kingship and legitimacy could be a topic of discussion and debate.

Most accusations of tyranny were in the form of reported speech or concern characters offstage.[3] The rare scenes of accusation managed its presentation carefully. Most accused of being tyrants were of lower rank than the speaker and held little actual power. For example, the eponymous character of Hardy's *Coriolan* is accused of tyranny to his face while, oddly, also being accused of sedition. He is a Roman aristocrat but he lacks extensive authority (1. 2.180, 240-250). One notable exception proves this rule. In Garnier's *La Troade*, Pyrrhe, an illegitimate son of Achille, accuses king Agamemnon of tyranny because he discourages indiscriminate murder (3. 1489). This outrageous claim is made incongruous by Pyrrhe's notable lack of self-control and murderous impulses. As such, it does not constitute a serious challenge to Agamemnon's authority.

When the accusation was made onstage, frequently, death threats occurred immediately following the accusation, further containing the fraught scene by associating the charge of tyranny with immediate death. The scenes of accusation become a frustrated and sterile pursuit that ends in the death of the accuser. The faultfinder only hoped that indirectly the tyrant would lose authority as a result of the latter's intervention and subsequent death. These moments of violence were a kind of phobic mask that focuses attention on the sometimes-imagined scene of suffering of the accuser, and away

[3] For some examples, see Garnier's *Antigone* (3.1.1027, 4.1.2401); Hardy's *Mariamne* (1. 2 125, 2.1. 312, 406), *Didon (*4 2. 1209), and *Coriolan* (1.1.98, 3. 1.700); de Viau's *Pyrame et Thisbé* (4.1. 723, 740); Rotrou's *Crisante* (2.1. 326, 338, 2. 3. 638, 2. 4.713, 4.1. 1154).

from the cause of his or her suffering. In Garnier's *Antigone*, there are lengthy scenes of accusation in which the eponymous character, her sister Ismène, and her fiancé Hemon all accuse king Creon of being a tyrant. [4] All of them immediately refer to death or are threatened with it as soon as they use the word "tyrant" (4. 1868-1872) (4. 1940-1941). In a lengthy scene with Creon, Hemon accuses his father of being a tyrant twice in the space of 11 lines and then makes a veiled threat that could be taken as involving murder or suicide: "Elle ne mourra pas qu'un autre n'aille après" (4. 2037, 3047, 2051). In Hardy's *Méléagre*, while there are frequent indirect discussions of his being a tyrant when the eponymous character is offstage, he is accused of being a tyrant only when he kills his uncle onstage (3.3.105). In Hardy's *Mariamne*, the eponymous character accuses Herode [5]of being a tyrant. Herode asks her, almost disbelievingly, what tyrannical qualities he could have. It appears to be the beginning of a conversation on the nature of tyranny and its primary qualities: "Méchante, qu'as-tu vu de tyrannique en moi?" (3. 1. p. 452). But after a mere three and a half lines, Herode interrupts her, cutting off her words in a threat to cut off her tongue: "... Je te ferai cracher/ Cette langue impudente, ou tels mots retrancher" (3. 1 p. 452). [6]This refocusing onto the body of the victim redirects attention away from the tyrant, literally replacing talk of illegitimate kingship with threats of a disintegrating body of the subject. Violence bounces off of the tyrant onto the language and bodies of other, sacrificeable, characters.

[4] There is no accent on their names in Garnier's version. I have retained the original spelling to further differentate these plays.
[5] See previous note
[6] I provide the page number, not the line number, for this play for which critical editions are less accessible

Frequently, violent action followed violent threats, always carried out on the accuser, never the tyrant. Scenes of violence and their motifs further managed the scene of confrontation with tyrants. From the period from approximately 1610 to 1639, when theater was at its most gory, violence frequently was complicit in a kind of misdirection concerning the origins of power and its regulation. Earlier plays were freer in many respects, but they still redirected from tyrannicide using terror. Scholars have theorized the destabilizing potential of suicides (Apostolidès 204). While it is clear that they had a demonstrable effect in many plays of this period, suicide was presented as the only available option in these plays to the detriment of extended, meaningful conversations and debates or redressive violence directed outward.

Scenes of dissent regarding sitting kings were bifurcated into nonviolent confrontation and suicide that misrecognized the origin of the conflict, often projecting it onto the gods. This projection reinforced the belief that punishment of kings could come only from the gods. At most, characters ask the gods to avenge them at a later time and take themselves out of the conflict by suicide, which also functioned as a kind of offering. Suicide was an often-aggressive action that had the effect of cutting of the character from his or her body, linking perpetrator and victim in a way that aligned with the ideology of torture. It redirected aggression onto the victim rather than addressing the larger causes of violence. In most plays, monarchic authority could be illegitimate and precarious but never directly assailable. That tyrannicide is never a viable option constitutes a critical blind spot. For instance, in Hardy's play *Scédase*, the eponymous character has no other recourse against an ineffectual legal system except the hope that the gods would intervene on his behalf and overcome tyrants if he committed suicide

(5.1.1329). Biet argues that this play put sovereignty on trial and shows the secret inner workings of political authority (xxviii). While it is the case that the play presents authority as contingent and fallible, the unequal power relation renders authority apparently unassailable, at least by the figures onstage at the time during which the play takes place.

To understand motifs of violence properly, we must first understand the uniquely early modern understanding of the object. Vuillermoz sees theater objects as private things associated with the body that are transformed into signs (17-18). Critically, he understands this period as one that transformed objects from vulgarly concrete to abstract (18) For him, either objects are wholly for contemplation, or, if quotidian, they have to lose their functionality and become symbolic (19). However, in the theater I study, the material function of objects is essential, which does not prevent said objects from also having a symbolic valence.

Evocations of regicide emphasized the glorified body of the king in such a way as to deny the gory reality of death and thus the interruption of continuity this death signified. Bloody or purple cloth mystified conflict and created a phobic object that foreclosed a scene of violence. Over time, references to blood were overtaken by references to the "purple" cloth, with strong resonances with martyrdom without the gore. Removing the suffering body from the stage put extra weight on a fungible symbol and an imposed narrative. It also created an environment that allowed for bloody cloth to terrorize with the absent-presence of this body instrumentalized into glory that seemed right and divinely inspired. These plays rarely staged confrontation directly between a tyrant and rebel, but they managed the scene of potential violence in other ways.

Bloody cloth created a visible sign of often-invisible suffering. It frequently misdirected away from suffering and its cause. In the case of tyranny onstage, bloody or purple cloth was a kind of phobic object that terrorized through the absence of suffering and the narrative that justified it. Bloody cloth both creates a sign of unseen suffering and paradoxically directs away from suffering. On one level, terrorizing images work in this way because terror is ultimately un-representable, emerging only as a kind of absent presence. On another level, these phobic objects are performing important work of redirecting attention away from the reality of pain that would tarnish the glorious image these plays cultivate and which deny the reality of death.

Merlin-Kajman's work gestures towards an understanding of this phenomenon in a brief analysis of cloth in *Hercule mourant*. Hercule is a tyrant early in the play because he confuses social function with private desires. He wants to control bodies. Nesse's blood signifies brutal passion that literalizes his confusion and forces him to achieve a kind of sanctification and the ability to be clement (Merlin-Kajman 120). The fabric's literalizing function is one of several means of deflection during this period.

This literalizing of Hercule's confusion between personal and political that Merlin-Kajman discusses also carefully manages the scene of violence and ultimately contributes to a kind of terror about the nature and value of physical suffering. His death on the pyre is not shown, but only indirect suffering, which Sandrine Berregard notes was the limit of *bienséance* at the time (194). His protracted death is implied, and the audience sees only the passage from life to death, not the actual death (197). Being covered by cloth impregnated with invisible and deadly blood also attenuate the scene of suffering, but it also makes it terrifying in its own way. The words used to describe the

blood on the cloth that kills him are themselves cloaked in a double meaning that is terrifying for the audience (2. 2. 474-478). For Berregard, there is something horrifying about even this attenuated death, something that requires a second spectacle to turn horror into admiration (197). Admiration is instrumental to the process of making the death less gorily visible, facilitating the play's depiction of it as necessary, divine, and fated, which further instrumentalizes and elides physical suffering into terror. It exerts a degree of control on the scene and facilitates a move from gore to glory. Similar to the way in which poisoned cloth in *Médée* controls the scene of violence, putting Hercule's suffering onstage eliminates the need for extensive gory description. Had the bodily harm occurred offstage, extensive description would have been necessary (Schweitzer 139, note 27). It also created the need for admirable spectacle to detract from gore. Though Hercule's death itself occurs off-stage, it is clear from the description that it is a carefully constructed staging, a self-immolation intended to inspire admiration and elides physical suffering in to a kind of martyrdom.

I will explore the construction of Hercule as a kind of apotheosized martyr in Chapter 2, placing it within a long tradition of works inspired by the pseudo-Senecan *Hercules Oetaeus*. Here, I will treat it briefly in order to demonstrate that this glorious image that elides the vulnerability of the recently dead monarch helps to deflect away from a serious consideration of the implications of tyranny. Characters blindly follow unreasonable orders, and the play interrupts discussion on their validity to focus on Hercule's lamentable ashes. The witnesses' reports are full of adulation unmitigated by the horror of having to put an innocent person to death. Though Hercule dies with the same heroism as a martyr, he is certainly not one. Even with this almost beatific attitude,

Hercule continually orders the death of Arcas. The witnesses do not question the validity of this order, temporarily dazzled by the passionate (and highly contrived) display of Hercule's self-immolation. Only later is there a fairly brief argument about the validity of sacrificing Arcas because of Hercule's jealousy. His apotheosis, in which he forgives Arcas, quickly renders all of these discussions moot. This intervention is a convenient one that relocates the source of authority back in the deified hands of Hercule and out of those of other characters. As Merlin-Kajman observes, the cloth that sticks to Hercule is the gods' way of punishing him by literalizing his confusion of personal and public. Only the gods can punish and redeem Hercule in the decorous series of veiled transformation from unopposed tyrant to pardon-dispensing demi-god. This fitting divine punishment locates all authority in the gods, making it solely their task to punish and reestablish law.

Though the aesthetic of violence in *La mort de César* is similar to that of *Hercule mourant*, there are notable differences in the depiction of sovereign authority. I will analyze the way César's fragile body is concealed behind a glorious apotheosis in Chapter 2. Here, I will briefly discuss César as an ideal monarch and the surreptitious way this play uses bloody cloth to dramatize continuity as personified by Marc-Antoine. In *La mort de César*, there is no conflict between the public good and private desires, as in *Hercule mourant*. César is not punished because he is willful or abusive of his powers. Lise Michel notes that this play is unusual for centering the conflict between two differing notions of political legitimacy rather than between political expediency and particular offenses to morality (118-19). With this unique choice of character motivation, César emerges in this play as an idealized figure of a monarch. There is no conflict between his individual desires and his actions on behalf of the public good. César's only

tragic flaw is that he does not recognize that others operate with a different set of assumptions about what constitutes legitimate authority.

If the bloody cloth in *La mort de César* serves not to obfuscate the problem of the individual within a system of royal and divine justice, it functions as another form of misdirection. The use of the bloody cloth here replaces other inspiring forms of representation. A gory depiction of César dead is crucial to most historical accounts and is notably absent in this play. In Quintillian's account, the crowd imagines that they see Caesar in the process of being killed when they see the toga. In some accounts, a gory wax effigy reinforces this impression. This imagined scene of his death provokes rage and mass violence, which initiated César's rule and status as a god.

Notably, in *La mort de César*, César's body is neither shown nor described vividly, but decorously distilled into a curious image of speaking blood. This figure of speech does not evoke a scene of César's death so much as it legitimates Marc-Antoine's own voice. Marc-Antoine turns himself into a supplement for the toga, describing how its blood speaks even though it is he who gives it voice:

> L'apologie glisse progressivement vers la proposée: dans les quatre premiers vers, Antoine parle en son nom de César, qu'il désigne par la troisième personne du singulier ("son destin") ; dans le deuxième groupe de vers, les deux personnages sont confondus dans l'adjectif possessif de la première personne du pluriel ("nos aventures") ; enfin, Antoine se trouve à son tour objet du discours et étant désignée par une voix qui n'est vraisemblablement autre que celle que l'orateur prête à César.(Vuillermoz 104).

It is his voice, loaned to César, which gives the toga a kind of rhetorical body. César, now

dead, lives, or is only perceptible, through the description of others alone. And yet none of these individuals can refer to their own agency or suggest that the interpretive spin they put on events is their subjective impression rather than fact.

This scene carefully manages the potentially violent image of a suffering body and then interrupts it before the mourners have a chance to commit the senseless violence common to all accounts of Caesar's funeral (Quintilian 402 bk. 6 ln 31; Plutarch 605 bk 68). Marc-Antoine is in total control of the narrative about César. In this process, the objectified human speaker is an important supplement to César's phantom presence. The toga does not move the audience by itself, but requires that a living speaker contain and contextualize its nonverbal language. Marc-Antoine is necessary in this scene not because the toga cannot "speak" for itself, but because its language is so much more direct and graphically violent.

This depiction is consistent with contemporary theories of monarchy both in its presentation of César as a just ruler and in the way in which his body disappears upon death. This depiction of kingship relies on a fiction of continuity that denies any interruption of succession. The emerging understanding of kingship emphasizes succession and bloodline. In a similar way, this play cannily focuses on Marc-Antoine as a kind of successor who can speak on behalf of César's blood. His words support a monarchist view of the function of royal blood as a symbol of a continuous link in legitimate rule. Not only this, but how he ventriloquizes César extends this illusion of continuity. He repeats the line about César's blood speaking to the assembled mourners four times (5.5. 1238, 1242, 1245, 1250) without ever acknowledging that it is he who gives voice to this otherwise silent speaking blood. His last words in the play, in which he

declares Cesar deified, first trace Cesar's divine bloodline from Vénus to Enée before insisting on Cesar's apotheosis (5.6. 1272-1280). His final act is to instruct Romans on their duty to commemorate, thereby taking on the mantle of authority (5.6. 1282-1286) This evocation is imbricated in descriptions of blood that signify the disruption and potential for social chaos in which tyrannicide results. The image of glory is predicated on an image of violence and rupture that must be constantly denied.

Marc-Antoine illustrates Brute's final remarks about new enthusiasm for imperial rule that followed César's death. The hydra's spilled blood renewed itself after being spilled (5. 5 1120-1122). This recasting of the myth of the hydra covers over a symbol for chaos and a never-ending cycle of violence with an image of the perennial ever-renewing nature of royal blood. As in the case of César's deified body, this play features a denial of suffering and its consequences. Or rather, these images of suffering are instrumentalized in a kind of perennial denial. For its apotheosis to be believed in, one must *not* be able to see it.

This depiction relies on a concealed image of dead bodies. It denies the realities and implications of the death of a king in a society that relied on succession as a benchmark for political legitimacy. César's death has to be evoked continually in language and through decorous images but his dead, assassinated body cannot be visible. His death can be perceived only in a narrative about continuity, one that overcompensates or covers over for loss, trauma, and rupture. It is this over-compensation that makes the specter of tyrannicide so terrorizing in this play. Behind the glorious evocations of royal dignity lurks an image of bodily suffering that engenders violence and social discord.

This image of assassination is hidden in one that indicates continuity of rule, even

in plays where no assassination has occurred. For instance, in *Cinna*, the play resolves nonviolently when Auguste, initially called Octave, pardons the would-be conspirators of a failed assassination attempt. The first four acts are haunted by the aftermath of past assassination and futile plans for future ones, but no assassination occurs. When Auguste forgives Cinna for his assassination plot, he offers him a new rank. This rank is presented as an exchange for the blood Cinna had attempted to shed. This line is a canny recasting of many real and imagined violent scenes evoked in this play. Before the plot was discovered, co-conspirators Cinna and Emilie imagined themselves gloriously covered in Octave-Auguste's blood after killing him (2.2. 698-699). Apostolidès interprets this line as signifying in a general way that Cinna does not have the requisite heroic qualities that the ability to shed blood signifies, not necessarily distinguishing between a subject acting on behalf of a sovereign and one acting against one (64). This observation helps unpack this line because it illustrates how Auguste presents Cinna's plot as an attempt at achieving higher social status, one that he was unworthy of because he had no other exploits or worthy achievements. Auguste effectively tells Cinna that he had no other way to distinguish himself and that assassination would simply be an attempt at gaining borrowed glory. Effectively, Cinna would not achieve greatness through the act of courageously shedding blood, but instead it would be the blood that covered him that would give him his status.

Octave-Auguste has transformed an image of social chaos into one of political continuity. It is an image of tyrannicide reemerging in a hallucination. As such, this image is an effective symbol for the coercive nature of clemency. Both this image and the offer of clemency superficially reject violence, but both are predicated on the memory of

it and all of the obligations implied in being a forgiven co-conspirator. These obligations also locate all authority in the sovereign. Only Octave-Auguste can initiate a symbolic exchange in which rank could be purported to be exchangeable for or preferable to blood. He also recasts assassination as a less-effective means of achieving social status, presenting himself as the origin of rank, whether derived through tyrannicide or submission. The purple of his rank will be a visible symbol of his subjugation, long recognized as an underlying political choice behind clemency (Bilis "Corneille's *Cinna*" 78). The play *Cinna* also evokes an image of bloody cloth, and it terrorizes with the absent presence of an impossible scene of tyrannicide and its aftermath. As I will further describe in Chapter 2, purple cloth in this period was commonly a way to terrorize with the absent present of violence, turning gore into glory in a way that denied the reality of physical suffering and bore a concealed trace of it.

Sacrificial logic, and the weapons and other stage objects that produced this ritual, constituted the only possible alternative to corrupt political systems. Rather than solving problems, this logic simply made violence seem fated and divinely inspired. In *Pyrame et Thisbé*, Pyrame thinks he is acting against the gods and his parents when he commits suicide, ending the torture he attributes to them (Bertaud 148). However, the way he describes his suicide conforms in many ways to the logic of sacrifice and especially of torture in the period. He performs a kind of inscription onto the body that localizes the meaning inside it that torture reveals.

Pyrame et Thisbé presents sacrifice in all of its seductive power, but it also denaturalizes it. The play shows the drive to expiate guilt through sacrificial violence as a pose of self-mastery in the face of total annihilation. The double suicide of Pyrame and

Thisbé offers two examples of the (self-)murderer victim dichotomy. Before Pyrame, the first to commit suicide, stabs himself, he sees his weapon as the *means by which* he might regain agency over himself: "Voici de quoi venger les injures du sort" (5.1.1109). He chooses to avenge his terrible misfortune by perversely making himself his own victim. As (self-)murderer, he instrumentalizes the weapon rather than (only) anthropormorphosizing it. After waiting in vain for death to come from the gods in the form of lightning striking or an abyss opening up, he takes up his dagger, describing it as "mon tonnerre, et mon gouffre, et ma mort" (5.1.1110). He is literally taking his future in his own hands, and, in a kind of stoic Roman self-sufficient pose, professes total control *by means of* his weapon. This act is a supplement to a fragile sense of self-mastery. True to Scarry's understanding of the weapon in the context of torture, he minimizes the real pain he is about to cause himself and cloaks it in the language of power. Even when he acknowledges the reality of pain, it is only in service of his foregone conclusion that his death is necessary to release him from extreme psychological suffering, and that self-annihilation can be a kind of mastery. The line "Mon supplice fera la fin de ma torture" (5.1.1112) is a chiasmatic phrase, which effectively cancels out his projected physical suffering by conflating it with the cessation of his psychological torment. This is how the torturer distances him- or herself from the body he or she harms. When he actually stabs himself, Pyrame uses a different kind of language that acknowledges the reality of bodily suffering. He says he is mutilating his body while he stabs himself: "Aime ce cœur, Thisbé, tout massacré qu'il est/ Encore un coup, Thisbé, par la dernière plaie/Regarde là-dedans si ma douleur est vraie" (5.1. 1114-1116). In this last line, Pyrame points to the depth of his wounds, revealing his body's brokenness and vulnerabilities and thus the

fissures in the rhetoric of self-mastery. When Pyrame experiences real physical pain and trauma, he goes from (solely a) murderer to a victim, one who is less concerned with demonstrating autonomy or exacting vengeance.

Only as a victim of violence is Pyrame able to acknowledge the reality of his physical and psychological pain. Pain shatters his speech, his lines retain their alexandrine form but are broken up by commas. Some of these commas may indicate the moments when Pyrame stabs himself, or perhaps simply gasps or makes some other nonverbal cry. Even his language, punctuated by holes or breaks, is preoccupied *by* holes; those in his chest having a kind of nonverbal communication of their own and acting as a testament to his pain even after his death. These lines speak volumes about the ways in which the body has its own powerful way of communicating (in both senses of the word) affect.

Thisbé's death scene represents a more extreme example of the attribution of affect to objects. It is similar to Pyrame's in several respects, but differs in the way in which she consistently projects her agency as well as her guilt onto the weapon. Never the means by which she commits self-murder, it is her murderer. Like Pyrame, she describes her guilt at causing her beloved's death (5. 2. 1177). In the same way, she first looks to an external force both to punish her and to take away her guilty torment with her life: "Que je sente à la fois, poison, flammes, et fers!/ Sus! Qui me vient ouvrir la porte des Enfers" (5. 2. 1225-1226). Unlike Pyrame, Thisbé never goes from being a murderer to being a victim, and never speaks directly about the reality of her pain except to lament that she merits more. When she picks up Pyrame's dagger, she does not view it as the means by which she will take her own life. Instead, she imagines it to be a murderer

whom she will invite to murder her:

> Ha! Voici le poignard qui du sang de son maître
>
> S'est souillé lachement, il en rougit, le traitre!
>
> Execrable bourreau! Si tu veux te laver
>
> Du crime commencé, tu n'as qu'à l'achever; (5. 2.1226-1230).

Thisbé is projecting her own guilt onto the weapon her lover used to commit suicide. In stating that the weapon will wash away its guilt in her blood, she is talking, in the most indirect way, about her own guilt and the means by which she must purge herself of it in her own tainted blood. Thisbé never directly acknowledges the psychological torment her guilt is causing her, nor does she directly discuss the pain she experiences. In the latter case, she presents herself as egging the dagger on, encouraging it to cause her more and more pain. Still addressing the dagger, she says: "Enfonce là-dedans, rends-toi plus rude, et pousse/ Des feux avec ta lame! Hélas, elle est trop douce!" (5.2.1231-1232). In her final lines, she laments that her death is the gentlest possible, and states that she wishes that the gods would have sent her a more protracted and extreme form of suffering: "Je ne pouvais mourrir d'un coup plus gracieux./ Ni pour un autre objet haïr celui des Cieux" (5.2.1231-1234). The "coup gracieux" is the stabbing she just administered to herself. "Celui des Cieux" is the death (*poison*, *flammes*, and *fers*) that the heavens apparently did not send. At no point does she describe her physical pain, only its absence or insufficiency. She is a totalitarian regime unto herself. The sight of Pyrame's mutilated body appears to have unleashed a frenzy of violent emotional contagion, and she cycles between contemplating Pyrame's mutilated body, the weapon, her guilt, and her death. As in many plays of this period, once one violent action is committed, it frequently

accelerates and compounds itself.

In the imagination of characters onstage, these weapons do not simply stand for pain or for its infliction; they are or are treated *as if* they were capable of causing pain as well as a range of related emotions. They work with the gestures, facial expressions, cries, and other props to produce a multisensory scene that makes pain as viscerally present as possible. This conflation, once it occurs, tends to escalate, mirroring the overall escalation or contagion of violence these plays set in motion.

In Rotrou's *Antigone*, Hémon commits suicide in front of his father in a way that can be interpreted as an aggressive action. However, the scene is carefully controlled to deflect attention away from Créon and attributes all possible retribution in the form of killing Créon onto the gods. He begins the confrontation by threatening his father with a drawn sword, saying he is no longer bound by conventional restrictions such as respect or family allegiance (5. 5. 1748-1751). But his real goal is not to commit tyrannicide but suicide, a kind of heroic despair couched in perverse terms of filial and feudal obligation. Hémon undoes his filial obligation by giving back the blood and body Créon gave his son (5.5 1752-1755). It is at the moment of death that he undergoes a strange separation from his body as victim and himself as perpetrator, all to reach the goal of releasing himself from filial obligation (5.5 1756-1757, 5.5 1778-1779). Hémon instrumentalized his body and its suffering in order to harm his father as much as possible within the constraints he appeared to be operating.

This staging makes suicide appear fated, divinely inspired and just, thus presenting Hémon as one of Créon's many victims (5. 5 1763, 1775). It also puts all acts of justice against the tyrant in the hands of the gods. This suicide is an aggressive act in

the context of the play, though his final lines to his father take back some of his more menacing terms. As Hémon dies, he puts his faith in fate to punish his father for his crimes (5.5. 1761-1765) before going back to showing respect for his father and hoping heaven will not avenge him (5.5. 1771-1775). Moreover, on a larger scale, these plays created an environment in which suicide was consistently the only possibility, which excludes scenes of confrontation, debate, and assassination.

What do we conclude from this brief survey of some of the major plays of the period? First, we see that traumatic and politically dangerous scenes of regicide were carefully managed in these plays. The most obvious example of this management is the prioritization of scenes of accusation over assassination. Other ways of managing such scenes worked to redirect violent potential back against the accuser. In many instances, suicidal stabbing or provoked executions redirected attention away from the political conflict depicted onstage. Royal bodies did not suffer in the same way. In fact, their suffering haunts the stage, concealed in an image of glory. Tyrants covered in bloody cloth deflect from a larger discussion of tyranny and its implications. These bloody, glorified images masked bodily suffering, and they were a fungible sign of suffering that, in requiring an interpretation, lended itself to those that rendered suffering just, divine, dictated by the gods, and thus not contingent on individuals and their actions. As a result, tyrannical acts became less actionable, and people focused less on the origin of conflicts and their causes. The motifs of violence I decode and relate to terror in each of my chapters can help elucidate some of the ways in which scenes of violence were instrumentalized into an image of monarchic continuity.

This dissertation is organized into three chapters, each of which analyzes a major

motif of violence. The first chapter explores the multiple ways in which bodily pain is projected onto and absorbed by weapons. Weapons effectively communicated an affect of suffering. They could signify power over others, denying the reality of pain. They also terrorized, provoking increasingly dramatic acts of violence. Unsheathed weapons unleashed an uncontained violence that ruptures or complicates a stable notion of theatrical resolution. Towards the end of the period I study, the weapon onstage no longer contributed to an aesthetic of rupture, but instead motivated the action. Characters not only stab, they talk about what stabbing is, how it is done, what happens when is stabbing is done, and what it means to stab ones' self or another person or people. The experience of pain and of the vulnerabilities it reveals is notably absent from these scenes of explicit violence. Daggers deny the reality of pain by making pain seem useful. This instrumentalization is especially clear in scenes of dissent between kings and unruly subjects. Suicide or provoked executions elided sustained scenes of confrontation, glossing over or directing away from the practical details of interpersonal conflict and instead ascribing their origins to the gods.

This first chapter focuses on how terrorizing violence was enacted on the micro scale through ritualized sacrifice on these other, generally non-royal, bodies. Filled with sacrificial language and a recognizable sequence of ritual acts, these plays deviate from René Girard's analysis of sacrificial violence. Sacrifice in these plays actually catalyzes rather than channels violence. These rituals were coherent, identifiable, and repeatable, built out of the building blocks of a long tradition of stock set pieces. These plays first identified a victim whose death will expiate a crime, frequently that of another individual. Then the tool of sacrifice is imbued with agency and affect, often taking on some of the

guilt the ritual proposes to purge. For added efficacy, these ritual acts generally occured on a grave or altar. These rituals gave a false sense of community solidity and individual autonomy. The largely non-royal individuals who do not originate conflict are made to seem seem to be the agents of change when they commit murder and die by suicide.

These plays are commonly read as indices of larger political uncertainty or they are read as moralizing Senecan drama, but instead they simply catalyzed violence onto nonroyal bodies, creating terror as a result. Building on France Marechal-Ninosque's distinction of profane and sacred sacrifice, an emerging distinction in this period, I posit that profane sacrifices demystified or deconstructed the terrorizing effect of their sacrificial efficacy.

Chapter 2 examines the more oblique ways in which blood, especially blood-spattered cloth, retained a trace of a scene of violence and physical suffering. Investigating both the Greco-Roman and the Christian martyrological traditions' impact on contemporary tragic drama, I analyze the ways in which bloody cloth rendered suffering more poignant and present than stabbing alone. Blood and bloody cloths were signifiers, and as such were indices of violence and pain. They were objects that acted as long exposure lenses in a camera. An entire violent sequence, a total act, was contained in one piece of lasting evidence, an object implying action. Whereas daggers exemplified sacrificial logic, cloth was used to glorify and valorize pain and violence. Daggers signified an intimate connection to violence. Cloth denied the reality of what it meant to experience actual pain. Clothing pain created an illusion of stability that bypasses existing ruptures, making pain forgettable as it becomes invisible. As the period progressed, the emphasis shifted from gore into triumphant, suffering-denying glory.

In Chapter 3, I study the role of female bystanders and survivors and the ways in which their presence onstage magnifies and distorts an image of the disappeared bodies of loved ones. In gloriously standing for their lost brothers, the figures of Marianne and Antigone in eponymous plays by Hardy, Rotrou, and l'Hermite come to obscure the violence of their brothers' gory deaths. The third chapter focuses on women who are relatives of victims of state violence. These women serve as witnesses to the violent acts. They are charged with confronting, or take on the responsibility of confronting, the perpetrators of state violence against their relatives. As a consequence of these confrontations, the women themselves are made victims of the State. Their sacrifices are represented as aesthetically beautiful performances. If, on the one hand, the death of women characters is a remediation or representation of the death of the political actor, on the other, these demises are sanitized. They become stand-ins for the deaths of brothers, serving as a compelling, attractive, and pleasing representation of the perpetration of state violence.

Through the move from daggers, to bloody cloth, and finally to witnesses, the dissertation first centers analysis on a direct encounter with the scene of violence and then builds from this work to motifs increasingly distanced from it. In this way, my intervention takes into account the complex relation between theatrical representation and physical suffering and terror. It establishes their status and function, positing that bodily suffering is especially difficult to locate coherently and effectively in the wordy texts of theater of this period. Furthermore, understanding the linguistic/discursive *dis*location that pain and its attendant terror caused can help scholars grasp the compelling nature of theater in this period between late renaissance and classical drama. Doing so can offer

ways to understand the connection and disconnection between suffering and language. Pain's dislocation ultimately diffuses expressions of acute physical and psychological pain in a series of stage objects. In seventeenth-century drama, these objects, from weapons and bloody cloth to witnesses and landscapes, served as indices of pain, amplifying and even obscuring the body they stood for.

Ultimately, theater violence and suffering raise the stakes of interrogating the status of the body onstage. Pain exceeds representation and is in some ways best understood through an analysis of theater that privileges more somatic, nonverbal modes. At the same time, it is this tension between the discursive and the aphasic dislocation that bodily and psychological pain caused that brings the complex relationship between suffering and different kinds of representation to light. Rather than simply destroying speech, pain dislocates and diffuses it, often taking up a variety of verbal motifs and visual stage objects. Thus pain is a critical component for the more visual depiction of suffering. These observations dovetail with work done in other periods. Pain is never simply ineffable, even as it destroys language. The language of pain can be intentionally nonreferential and objectless, serving to disrupt narrative conventions (Hainge 24-25). If pain cannot be adequately objectified without being distanced from the body, it can, however, be narrated or mediated by different forms of congition (Mintz 5, 95, 116). Most importantly, to understand how pain destroys or distorts language, we first have to be attentive readers of how it fractures into different motifs, and the ways in which these motifs instrumentalize pain and surpass ideological frameworks. For example, Brooke Holmes in "Economy of Pain in the Illiad" provides a corrective for David Morris's characterization of the *Illiad*'s stoic detachment from pain by analyzing how descriptions

of weapons and blood operate. Holme's analysis demonstrates that, because the poem focuses on the wounded rather than the dead, the pain inflicted by weapons becomes comensurate and exchangeable within a system that attributes value and meaning to pain (52, 59) It is only when we grasp how wounding operates in an economy of pain that its fragile limits become clear. In Holmes' analysis, Agamemnon's pain is radically unlike that of others in order to suggest that suffering is ultimately useless and exceeds attempts at objectification (74). Canny readers of any period's literature and visual culture must be attentive to the myriad ways in which language objectifies pain by deflecting it into ideological signsystems. Revealing that moments that privilege the body's vunerability, though exceedingly rare, constitute the most ethical engagement with the spectacle of the suffering body.

Chapter I: *Staging Stabbing, Ritual Violence, and Stagecraft*

Introduction

Commonly, theories of sacrifice in early modern French literary history focus on kingship, which my introduction treats at length. Here, I will simply observe that the figure of the king, as a coherent concept of sovereignty, may well have been a symbolically sacrificial object when considered on the macro scale. Yet one of the most effective means by which terror became real for spectators was when other, nonroyal characters sacrificed or were sacrificed in place of figures of the king. Scholars agree that theater engages with or "sacrifices" the concept of sovereignty. But such an exclusive focus on this macro scale ignores an important shift in focus onto nonroyal figures in drama of the period between 1580 and 1620. It is generally these nonroyal figures who bear the brunt of violence and expiate the crimes of tyrants. For example, Christian Biet's *Théâtre de la cruauté* theorizes that the stage is analogous to a place of sacrifice, and that sovereignty is its sacrificial surrogate.

> Or le tout premier objet propre à cette réflection/réflexion sur l'implication des passions dans les conduites humaines est bien évidement le souverain […] En effet, la représentation du souverain pris par ses passions, suivi du sacrifice spectaculaire du souverain permet de poser de toutes les manières la question de la légitimité de la souveraineté. (Biet xli)

Here the sovereign, or a stable notion of sovereign authority, is sacrificed in exchange for greater spectator autonomy and accountability. But in the actual plays Biet engages with, it is largely nonroyal individuals who are sacrificed. Refocusing on the rite of sacrifice and the role of daggers in it reveals that these plays, far from using violence to

teach morality or destroy a coherent theory of political sovereignty, are first and foremost preoccupied with maximizing violent spectacle that terrorized and detracted from the real suffering of real bodies. Adapting Elaine Scarry's theory of the weapon, this chapter re-centers consideration on the central role of the dagger in making pain seem just, fated, and divinely ordained. Understanding how these terrorizing depictions of graphic violence operated helps us understand the aesthetic of rupture and why violent stabbing aesthetic persisted after graphic violence left the stage.

The definitive scholarly work on *ancien régime* sacrificial violence in theater, France Marchal-Ninosque's *Images du sacrifice*, provides a corollary for my project. Focusing on the period 1670-1840, Marchal-Ninosque notes many of the central features of sacrifice that form the basis for my analysis. First of all, even in eighteenth-century drama, largely hostile to sacred violence, sacrifice was an oft-repeated, recognizable theme (12). Additionally, she observes that the names of sacrificial objects revealed a desire to sacralize and create fear. She even goes so far as to say that these objects bear the responsibility of the crime (15). Despite some notable differences between pre-classical and classical tragedy, the ritual of sacrifice was a recognizable feature of both.

In pre-classical French tragedy between 1580 and 1620, theatre and its violence were systematically attributed specific qualities or powers. These qualities were illustrated or thematized in the form of an identifiable "ritual": sacrificial stabbing onstage. Sacrificial stabbings occurred on graves or altars following direct address to the knife used, as well as to the gods to whom the offering was made. These sacrifices were transactions with the gods in exchange for continued internecine retributive violence. These plays constitute an index for a community of spectators who understood

that theater violence did things rather than merely showed them. Focusing on the ritual of sacrificial stabbing as a promise or guarantee of future violence in *Scédase* (circa 1620), *Didon se sacrifiant,* (circa 1605 to 1615), and *Pyrame et Thisbé*, (circa 1621), this chapter examines how theatrical violence replicates itself across temporal and representational limits, rather than having a moralizing function or a coherent political agenda.

Graves, bodies, blood, and daggers were key elements of this "script" repeated in a number of plays between 1580 and 1620. Together, along with a highly codified language, these elements combined in scenarios of sacrificial enactment.[7] Their shocking nature rendered these scenarios more tragic in the contemporary sense of bloody, terrible, and noble (d'Aigaliers 202 and Billard 2). Explicit violence in these plays was contagious for bystanders, on- and offstage alike. These scenes were recognizable set pieces, the daggers used in the sacrifice imbued with agency and affect. This emotional response, catalyzed by the ritual enactment of sacrifice, facilitated confusion between real and representational space. A coherent narrative of sacrifice abounds and yet is ultimately undermined. Stabbing on graves and altars on the French stage constituted an identifiable, endlessly repeated enactment, one that was thought to be able to continue a cycle of retributive violence. These plays added elements to their source texts, to which they were generally faithful, in order to insert or amplify existing references to sacrifice. For instance, Biet highlights an important modification Hardy made to his source text for *Scédase*: he omits Scédase's ghost who in Plutarch's version of the story appears after the aggrieved father kills himself. Biet argues that there is no need to show Scédase's ghost urging retribution because the spectator is left with a kind of haunting presence of this

[7] For a discussion of scenario as a theoretical concept, see Taylor

figure, whose suicide troubled resolution (342). However, he does not consider the role that sacrifice played, something Hardy added to Plutarch's version (316). Engaging in a consistent practice of virtuosic repetition with a difference, these plays rehearse scenarios of violence.

These scenes are rehearsals of violence in two distinct but related senses. The consistency with which sacrifice appears in these plays over a forty-year period suggests that they shaped, and were shaped by, a theater-going public. Enders observes that torture rhetoric and logic underwrote the aesthetic of violence in medieval passion plays (72, 97). Similarly, early seventeenth-century plays inscribed themselves on the collective memories of these spectators. In another sense, these scenes are rehearsals because of the way that they precede culture, enacting violence upon the spectator. As Anthony Kubiak argues, terror emerges in culture through theater. He writes, "Terror is so basic a part of political life that it is visible only as theatre. The media do not simply need terrorism, they construct it mimetically" (2). In short, theater and other media enact violence upon the spectator, helping to shape and condition a viewing public. Similarly, theater produces rather than reflects violence and rupture. Janet Clare uses a similar methodology in her work on English Renaissance drama in "Marlowe's 'Theater of Cruelty.'" Clare approaches violent plays without reducing them to historical context or psychology. She instead focuses on Marlowe's shift away from contemporary ideology and toward the aesthetic (79). For her, Marlowe "cultivated an aesthetic of violence, a paroxysmal art with an obsessively violent tone and sensuality of spectacle" (80). She compares this aesthetic with Artaud's project of moving theater away from representation and coherent character psychology and toward incantation and stage tableaux (82-83).

The ritual incantation, in this case, is sacrifice. Such a formulation is perhaps unconventional. Part of my project will be to understand how "sacrifice" in a theatrical context works, and to suggest possible complements or corrections for existing theoretical models as well as the historiography of the early modern period as a whole.

The relationship between sacrifice and theater is generally understood to expiate or purge violence. René Girard's *La Violence et le sacré* has been the most cogently articulated and widely-adapted model within and beyond theater criticism. He argues that catharsis in theater is an extension of sacrificial rituals of purification and atonement. Targeting and ritually murdering a surrogate allowed communities to protect themselves from escalating retributive violence. He further argues that potential internecine conflict was reimagined as a purely external force, such as a plague or a curse, in order to avoid confrontation. The community as a whole executed a well-chosen disposable victim in place of a well-connected malefactor:

> Elle [la victime] est à la fois substituée et offerte à tous les membres de la société par tous les membres de la société. C'est la communauté entière que le sacrifice protège, de sa propre violence (22)

In effect, sacrifices are a kind of collective transaction or expenditure, presupposed to be mediated by the gods. It is a simple exchange dressed up as a meaningful, efficacious ritual. Collective misrecognition is necessary in order to sustain this illusion of exteriority:

> L'opération sacrificielle, on l'a vu, suppose une certaine méconnaissance. Les fidèles ne savent pas et ne doivent pas savoir le rôle joué par la violence. Dans cette méconnaissance, la théologie du sacrifice est évidemment primordiale. C'est

le dieu qui est censé réclamer les victimes (21).

Girard understands this violence as a means of resolving crises before an established legal system could take its place.

Sacrifice as it is traditionally understood does not explain pre-classical French drama. In this theater sacrifice re-channeled violent potentiality but, contrary to Girard's formulation, did not always diffuse it. In the plays I study in this chapter, sacrifice deferred and extended violent retribution beyond the temporal limits of the plays. Main characters frequently proffered efficacious sacrifices, in the form of homicides or suicides, in order to continue the cycle of violence after the events in the play have transpired. These events fit into a larger cycle of intergenerational retribution, apparent in the best of these plays but most visible in, as Benjamin termed it, "the lean body of the inferior work" (52). In Vincent Borée's *Achille* (circa 1627) the play ends with a dying Memnon foretelling the eponymous character's inglorious death:

MEMNON. En peu de mots je vais t'avertir de ton sort.

Sache donc, cruel, que jamais Polyxene

N'allègera les fers de l'amour qui te gêne,

Et que bientôt Pâris te fera trébucher,

Pour tes grandes cruautés, qui lui coutent si cher:

Ainsi veut le destin en pouvoir redoutable

Qui ne fit onc Arrêts, qui ne fut véritable

ACHILLE. Meurs donc, cependant, nous verrons puis après,

Si les Dieux nous donneront le Myrte, ou le Cyprès. FIN (309[8])

[8] This play lacking line numbers, I provide the page number.

Memnon relates exactly what will happen to Achille in the next cycle of violence, gesturing outside the temporal confines of the play. Achille seems unperturbed, answering the equivalent of "Die, then" and "We'll see." This short and perfunctory ending, in its inelegant way, illustrates the cliffhanger endings typical of these plays in which murder and sacrifice guarantee more violence on the horizon. Similarly, the 1592 play *Pyrrhe* begins and ends with an act of retribution that continues the cycle of violence. In Act I, the goddess Diane laments Polixene's death in a soliloquy that puts a bloodthirsty Pyrrhe in place of Ovid's reluctant priest:

> Pyrrhe non autrement tigre sans amitié
>
> Lors un chacun pleurait de pitié,
>
> *Sans larmes* regarda tant de grâces mourantes (8, italics mine) [9]

Pyrrhe ends with the chorus preparing to avenge Pyrrhe's untimely end: " Sus, sus, courons après! Prenons, troupe, les armes…Il faut ensanglanter ces pervers tôt ou tard" (78). These plays present snapshots of an endless spiral of vengeance.

While appearing to conform to Girard's model of containment, French theater performed between 1580 and 1620 activated violence's contagious potential. In Alexandre Hardy's *Didon se sacrifiant*, ritual superficially appears to resolve crises. However, through visual *coups de théâtre* and internal didascalies, this play illustrates the many ways in which violence may be unleashed onto a community. Furthermore, it makes a distinction between illustrations of violence's viral potentiality and enactments that prolong conflict beyond the temporal scope and representational limits of the play. Hardy's *Scédase* demonstrates how the spectacle (and absent presence) of bodies can

[9] Compare with standard contemporary translation, for example "*Les XV livres"* (651; bk 8).

contain, channel, and unleash violence's viral potentiality. It, like *Didon se sacrifiant*, also features sacrifice that "guarantees" the possibility of future acts of vengeance. *Pyrame et Thisbé* thematizes this viral contagion, the efficacy of which is evident in contemporary accounts of its use of daggers in its performances. This theater, so often reduced to moralizing or overly politicized readings, illustrates the many ways in which theater reinforces an ideology of efficacious violence. To consider these plays as moralizing would be to fall prey to this ideology. Dissimilar from both renaissance and neoclassical tragedy in several important respects, the singular aesthetic of plays performed between 1580 and 1620 poses a conceptual challenge to established scholarship on sacrifice in and beyond seventeenth-century drama. Because I concentrate on a relatively restricted period of forty years, I can study works that fall through the cracks of more temporally capacious scholarship. Some examples include Marchal-Ninosque's work, which for coherence's sake focuses only on literal sacrifices and not acts of murder described as sacrifices (14). Florence Caigny in her lengthy *Sénèque le tragique en France* necessarily delimits her investigation to plays adapted directly from those written by Seneca, unable to treat the many plays written in the style of Seneca that abounded between 1590 and 1630 (13, 356). In a chapter-length work with a more limited historical scope, I can address a significant gap.

Theorizing Sacrifice: Morality and Materiality

Girard's work, like that of much theater scholarship, focuses on the Greek tradition of drama. Thus, the critical understanding of sacrifice he and other scholars discuss sometimes does not elucidate sacrifice's role in the more Roman- or Senecan-

inspired drama in early modern drama. Girard's extrapolations from Greek tragedies pose certain problems. He notes that in Greek tragedy what one would generally call "murder" or "self-murder" is described euphemistically as sacrifice (13-14), these murders never explicitly shown. For Girard, such a formulation suggests an unrecognized connection between the two acts, and how the latter operates as a surrogate to channel and contain the former (14). Theater then took over from sacrifice, the substitution of feigned suffering for actual execution predicated on another misrecognition (400-05). In contrast, sacrifices in plays between 1580 and 1620 featured very few examples of misrecognition in a strict sense. While dramaturges such as Hardy and de Viau attributed sacred qualities to murders and suicides, they clearly felt no injunction against presenting their practical function in resolving short-term problems. Nor was there anything to prevent them from actually presenting the sacrifices onstage with all their gory detail.

Other models that link sacrifice and theater cannot fully explain this integral part of early modern irregular tragedies. For instance, Nicole Loraux studies the relationship between gender and stage violence in *Façons tragiques de tuer une femme*. Using Greek theater as her point of departure, Loraux identifies stabbing with masculine martial combat and throat-cutting or strangulation with feminine sacrifice or suicide. This gendered division between both methods of violent killing did not exist in the French theater of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century. For instance, in the Greek sources Loraux analyzes, it is important that Polyxene has her throat cut rather than her chest stabbed. This choice on the part of Pyrrhe signifies that he is sacrificing her as a woman and not killing her, as he would a man. However, it is perfectly legitimate that, in Ovid's version, Polyxene is stabbed in the chest. Loraux reads Ovid's rendition of

Polyxene's death as emphasizing her valor, claiming that she is not a sacrifice because she is stabbed in the chest like a warrior (man) (96). In the Roman tradition, in which suicide is an assertion of autonomy, this alteration does not render her death less of a sacrifice. Her courageous death relates to others in the Roman canon, particularly that of Dido. Plays during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries followed Roman norms of sacrifice. In Luc Percheron's *Pyrrhe*, the eponymous character stabs Polyxène in the chest (6). There is no meaningful gender distinction that differentiates male and female sacrifice.

In these plays, unlike those Loraux describes, there was no misrecognition of Polyxène's heroic act in baring her breast. Perhaps more importantly, the gender-based distinction between suicide or murder and sacrifice was also absent, though these plays and contemporary translations erotized stabbing women.[10] What does exist is the valorization of the action of stabbing, regardless of the gender of the individual being stabbed. This model conforms to a Roman rather than a Greek model of gender, in which gender is determined by qualities such as active versus passive and discipline instead of laxity or "effemininity." Similarly, in theater of this period murders and suicides are not misrecognized as sacrifices; they are, indeed, codified rituals imbued with the power to change the course of events.

The interpretive models proposed by Girard and Loraux do not fully describe pre-classical theater, despite superficial similarities. Girard's model, like Loraux's, extrapolates from anthropological treatises of sacrifice and combines it with analyses of Greek tragedy. Specific theatrical traditions or practices, such as Senecan drama and its

[10] For an extreme example, see Ovide. *Les XV livres (*651; bk 8).

early modern afterlives, are outside the scope of their work. As mine is a more restricted historical period, I can assess sacrificial violence from the vantage point of Senecan drama.

Scholarship that investigates this connection frequently privileges morality and pedagogy in its analysis rather than theatrical aesthetics. E.C. Forsyth describes the Senecan models for these plays at length in *La Tragédie française de Jodelle à Corneille (1553-1640); le theme de la vengeance*. For Forsyth, Senecan tragedy is moralistic, its violence and catastrophic *dénouements* serving to inspire horror for the act of vengeance (102, 105). This analysis is based on close attention to the distinctive structure of Senecan tragedy with its long sentences and moralizing reflections. The plays that conform to this model of stoicism and morality are renaissance humanist tragedies (102). Continually, Forsyth compares later plays in the Senecan tradition unfavorably to this model, claiming later authors deviated from it (278, 281, 335), and only emphasized the crudest violent effects (303). Forsyth, in identifying the ways in which irregular drama deviated from the supposed content, if not the form, of Senecan drama, pinpoints an important feature of this generation of theater. Like many critics of theater, Forsyth identifies this theater tradition's vitality but overestimates its emphasis on moral instruction.

Frequently, efforts to read morality into these plays conflate Senecan style with didacticism. Though Florence Caigny's near-exhaustive analysis of renaissance and *ancien régime* adaptations of plays by Seneca, *Seneque le tragique*, generalizes about the moralizing function of these plays, she adds that, for the period under investigation, the priority was on hyperbolic style as was the desire to touch the audience with vivid scenes of explicit violence (356-357). Moreover, when Caigny uses the term "morality" in

reference to Renaissance drama, in actual practice this generally refers to extremely normative interpretations of tyranny in which the only recourse against tyrants was patience and a belief in conveniently tardy divine retribution (276, 280). Where her observations are useful are the moments when her work treats choice and guilt, themes which were greatly amplified and rendered more complex in renaissance adaptations of Senecan drama (280-83). The illusion of choice is a core component of the sacrificial ritual in these plays, and we can consider the greater degree of free will these plays present as a necessary precondition of sacrificial violence.

Michael Meere also sees morality as a defining feature of Senecan-inspired early modern plays, focusing, unlike Caigny, on plays inspired indirectly by Seneca. In doing so, he re-centers the analysis of the play on the illusion of self-determination. Biet focuses on the supposed incapacity of the characters to act with clarity, trapped by their remorse and superstition (395). Meere, however, puts responsibility back on the characters.

Meere stresses the importance of the last lines of *Alcméon* in order to support his moralizing reading:

> One could agree with Biet and insinuate that *Alcméon* accumulates the horrors without any moral or pseudo-moral commentary by a chorus or any other character, without a conclusion, without a decisive, authorial judgment. However, a closer reading of the last lines of the tragedy point toward an edifying message. The tragedy ends with Alphesibée's last words:
>
> Moi-même m'offrirai de première victime
>
> Et vous satisferai de 1'erreur de mon crime,

Si l'angoisseux remords qui me tue à présent

De trainer jusque-là ma vie est suffisant (5.11. 1486-1489).

Although it is too late, she regrets her actions, and seems to end her life in order to not cause any more harm. She realizes that she is to blame for all the suffering: she is the guilty one, because of her 'vengeance feminine'(263-64). This reading, while it focuses too intensely on morality, rehabilitates Alphesibée as an individual capable of rational action. In my reading, Alphesibée, even in this moment of emotional turmoil, is clearheaded enough to enact ritual violence to commemorate the death of her brothers. She makes a distinction between her husband's murder and those of her brothers. Eudème brings all three bodies onstage, and Alphesibée puts her grief to one side so that she can rejoice in the revenge she has exacted by murdering her husband:

Morte? Ah point! Je voudrais ressortir du cercueil

Pour paitre du spectacle agréable mon œil

Déloyal, inconstant, adultère, volage,

M'expier du trépas l'outrage perpétré. (5.1.1440-44, italics mine)

She is far from lamenting her "vengeance feminine" here, but considers her actions justified. She even fantasizes about satisfying her vengeance further by mutilating and devouring his body (5.1.1440-44 1451-55). In contrast to the lack of pity and piety she shows toward her dead husband, she treats her brothers' bodies as sacred. In the next several lines, she blames herself for their deaths but does not blame the act of vengeance that initiated it. Rather, her last few lines are a part of a ritual commemoration in which her death is a pious offering:

Beaux corps que j'ai livrés à la parque homicide,

D'avance recevez de vôtre parricide

Ces larmes que j'épands, ces cheveux arrachés. (1478-80)

She then describes how she will build a temple for their relics, making it a refuge for innocent people in need of divine protection

Prenez les jusqu'à tant qu'au sépulcre couchez,

Que mis dedans un temple, immortelles reliques,

Que de vœux honorez & d'offrandes publiques,

Tutélaires reçus du peuple des humains,

Recours des innocents, qui vous joindront les mains,

Moi-même m'offrirai de première victime, (1481-86)

She offers herself as a sacrificial victim to commemorate their lives. Not only does she endorse their act of vengeance in doing so, but in killing herself she further validates this compensatory and *sacred* act. To my mind, Meere's argument holds far better when he discusses the work of playwrights such as Garnier and others in the period before 1580. In the period I study, edification is much more of an afterthought, if not simply a function of style. I take Alexandre Hardy's assertions in his prefaces about the didactic function of his plays somewhat less seriously than does Meere, noting that these prefaces were written long after the performance of these plays, that Hardy chose plays he retroactively considered exemplary, and that together text and paratext formed part of a concerted, and ultimately failed, effort to legitimate his outmoded body of work.[11] In actual practice, morality is an afterthought in these plays.

[11] For a treatment of Hardy's efforts to remain relevant through publishing selected works, see Forestier and Della Valle.

Perhaps another rendering of Senecan drama could help tease out why practitioners of this mode would not necessarily concern themselves with imparting a moral along with their plays. Kubiak's reading of Seneca's *Medea* moves away from didacticism:

> Medea's desire is not a desire for justice through revenge as it is in Euripides, it is a Luciferian desire for the sublime generated by the sheer enormity of the transgression she contemplates. (45)

Similarly, tragedies between 1580 and 1620 call the basis of law and sovereign authority into question rather than emphasize morality. [12] They present terrorizing scenes not to teach the audience but to inscribe a distinctive, long-lasting style onto their collective imagination. The ultimate result of this aesthetic is a persistent belief in the utility of violence within a narrow scope: nonroyal individuals doing violence to themselves or other nonroyal figures.

In this vein Marchal-Ninosque focuses on concepts of the victim rather than kingship, positing that pre-classical protagonists who were sacrificed had heroic stature rather than being passive victims. Before 1670 the sacrificial object was illustrious and courageous, whereas the act of sacrifice was tragic and sacred. Rotrou's *Iphigénie* and later Racine's version privileged a pseudo-Christian martyr or *femme forte*, whereas the eighteenth century deplored this "superstition" (30, 37). This refocusing away from kings better reflects the broader base of individuals being sacrificed in pre-classical tragedy, which was expansive enough to include non-royal and non-aristocratic figures. It also will enable me to demystify the heroic presentation of these victims, since it served as a

convenient deflection away from tyrannicide. A crucial difference between my analysis and that of Marchal-Ninosque is that, in the latter's historiographic account, a distinction between sacred and profane sacrifice never emerged in classical drama (20). She locates a profane secondary meaning emerging in late sixteenth-century French language, and she argues it appeared only later in eighteenth-century libertine novels satirizing piety (19-21). However, in my reading, a profane use of sacrifice permeated many of the plays under consideration. These sacrifices were likely intended to contrast with the sacred, efficacious sacrifices that close the plays. Properly analyzed, instances of "profane" sacrifice can help demystify the seductive narrative of violent stabbing's supposed efficacy.

My main focus will be how these sacrifices were staged, thereby illustrating how terror became intelligible on the micro scale. There is precedence in scholarship for the fruitful study of staging of sacrifice and the ways in which it catalyzed emotional intensity. For example, Hélène Bilis furthers her argument in *Passing on* by evoking the staging of *Crisante* and *Sémiramis*. Props such as severed heads, the (ghostly) bodies of kings, tombs, and bloody swords catalyzed the action in these plays as well as intensified the dramatic effect in these scenes (61-62, 19-193). Had Bilis been investigating sacrifice, this evocation of stagecraft would have furthered her argument. In addition, reaching back into plays even earlier than *Crisante* would have proved even more beneficial.

Scholarship on earlier drama points the way. We can read Cavaillé's careful analysis of the effigy in early modern stagecraft not only as an analysis of shifting notions of kingship but as a shift in the use of stage objects. Cavaillé suggests that the

practice of using effigies onstage obsolesced because the possibility of failure to incite feudal *homage* was too high (313). The practice of using effigies was not limited to royal bodies, however. Effigies would have likely been used for two rape victims in *Scédase*, who are found in a well and whose bodies are presented onstage. Also, while there is one reference to Achille's "royalle grandeur" in Polixene's speech where she wants to get rid of him (III. 2. 961), he is generally described as a brave warrior. In any case he is not *the* king of the people mourning him. They are the heads of state of other parts of Greece, not his vassals. And, crucially, Achilles is one of many individuals who die while Agamemnon and Menelaus, to say nothing of Helen and Paris, all originators in their own way of the Troyan War, remain alive. The excessive blame alternated by scant praise Cavaillé notes (309) is, on a micro scale, not about shifting notions of kingship but the process of scapegoating in order to preserve the inviolability of the sitting, living kings who surround the dead body. The material history surrounding these plays provides a richer store of information concerning how theater was theorized or conceptualized. When we focus on the object, we see that rituals of sacrifice code it and the heroized victim within a pernicious and seductive narrative of efficacy.

Stage practices and ritual sacrifice in *Pyrame et Thisbé*, *Scédase*, and *Didon se sacrifiant*

The object in pre-classical drama was a crucial part of making visible the ideology of pain this theater endorsed. These objects had an additional symbolic valence when used as part of sacrificial ritual. Moreover, they were emotional catalyzers, objects that would reliably create the maximum emotional impact. Recent work on stage

practices facilitates a more general consideration of stagecraft in theater at this time. In this light, Christian Biet's work could also be re-focused on the stagecraft surrounding bodily suffering and death. His reading of pre-classical theater is motivated by his important work on stage practices, particularly the way in which its scaffolding was reminiscent of the scaffold of execution and the elevated altar in Catholic Mass (xxix). Furthermore, their graphic depiction of suffering facilitated a momentary confusion among these liminally sacred spaces (xxxii-xxxiii). If we delve deeper into the stage production of these violent moments of stabbing, it becomes clear that their ability to create affective response was not limited to their association with the Eucharist and the scaffold of execution, but that these served as *lieux communs* or a collection of visual cues with their own particular associated affect. These plays related more to one another than they did to these social spaces. Taken together, they create a coherent, seductive narrative about the transformative power of (self) murder. In *Pyrame et Thisbé*, *Scédase*, and *Didon se sacrifiant*, three plays that exemplified the work of stabbing, daggers operate as catalyzers of the affective confusion which galvanized audiences.

Marc Bayard's formulation of the affect conjured by the organization of space in drama prior to 1640 sustains Biet's observations. Space was affective if not symbolic and is presented in a context of a diffused network of signs such as mountain, grotto, forest or palace evoking different emotions such as danger or peace rather than imitating these spaces (27, 36). Drawing both from a medieval model of *théâtre à compartiments* and perspectival space in vogue in contemporary Italian theater, this staging presenting fragmented and multiple points of perspective. Bayard's formulation dovetails with Biet's understanding of the theater scaffold as containing and confusing the distinction

between spaces of execution and religious observance.

> la feinte dramatique, en ne recherchant pas la représentation réelle du monde, suscite un dépassement imaginaire […] il ne se laisse pas contempler, il est plutôt un vecteur d'action et d'imagination (54-55)

This theater does not rely on vraisemblance or a normative understanding of catharsis:

> L'image mise en relief acquiert vis-à-vis de la poésie une fonction emphatique: elle n'est pas encore au service d'une théâtralité cathartique qui sera présente dans le théâtre régulier. Elle n'est ni un lieu neutre ni un carrefour des destinées, elle est au contraire un 'catalyseur' de sensation, un accélérateur émotionnel. (67)

Bayard focuses more on space than on the objects in that space, but he attributes qualities to the décor that sustain a larger inquiry into a theory of object and affect. The way that space differed in this theater is closely related to the way that objects in that space functioned. We can see this phenomenon in the identical reactions later seventeenth-century theater critics had toward the organization of space and the use of objects in that space. D'Aubignac and Boileau citied Théophile de Viau's *Pyrame et Thisbé*, which Bayard discusses all too briefly as an exemplarily ridiculous sterile artifice.

Instead, this play exemplifies the early seventeenth-century stagecraft Bayard discusses. We luckily have a comparatively large amount of information on the staging of *Pyrame et Thisbé*. First of all, we have a sketch of the stage from the *Mémoire de Mahelot* and a list of props (see fig. 1).

In the background of this scene was a kind of cross-section of two courtyards separated by a wall. We see the breadth of this wall as well as what might be the hole through which the two lovers spoke. In the foreground is an entirely different space

signifying an area outside the walls of the city of Babylon. This space is constituted by two caves, Ninus's Tomb, a fountain, and a mulberry tree. Bayard briefly analyses this staging, observing that the space in the background was symbolic, conjuring impressions of social division, while the foreground was more slightly more "realistic" (203). The décor as a whole clearly serves to dramatize a much-commented-on opposition between nature and culture. [13] He observes that only 14.5 percent of the action occurs in the background and only 10 percent in the foreground and that the rest of the play had no direct relation to this largely thematic décor (203). Bayard could have added that it was precisely these fragmented and multiple points of perspective that later critics found opprobrious. Bayard discusses criticism by Jean Chapelain and La Mensnardière at length especially as they relate to Mairet's polemics and the Querelle du Cid. His project could be fruitfully extended by looking at how D'Aubignac discussed *Pyrame et Thisbé*. In a sense D'Aubignac came too late to appreciate how spaces, and objects in those spaces, conjured emotional responses without needing to be verisimilitudinous. *Pyrame et Thisbé* was immensely popular during the thirty years after its initial performance in 1620, at which time D'Aubignac would have been about sixteen. Likely, he saw the play significantly later, which would explain his conviction that the staging was entirely unsuitable. He applies a painterly organization of space to the stage, something for which Chapelain's work had established the ground:

> il faut encore que l'espace en soit présupposé ouvert dans la réalité des

[13] For a selection of works treating this subject, see Mazaheri, Meding, and Saba.

choses, comme il le parait dans la représentation. Car puisque les Acteurs y vont et viennent d'un bout à l'autre, il est certain qu'il n'y a point de corps solide qui puisse y empêcher la vue ni le mouvement (2.6.103.)

He deplores both the multiple points of perspective and the lack of correspondence this decor has with the majority of the action onstage.

On peut juger de là, combien fut ridicule dans la *Thisbé* de Théophile un mur avancé sur le Théâtre, au travers duquel elle et Pyrame se parlaient et qui disparaissait quand ils se retiraient afin que les autres Acteurs se pussent voir : Car outre que les deux espaces qui étaient deçà et delà ce profane-mur, représentaient les deux chambres de Thisbé et de Pyrame, et qu'il était contre toute apparence de raison, qu'en ce même lieu le Roy vient parler à ses Confidents, et moins encore qu'une Lionne y vient faire peur à Thisbé, je demanderais volontiers, par quel moyen supposé dans la vérité de l'action, cette muraille devenait visible et invisible ? Par quel enchantement elle empêchait ces deux Amants de se voir et n'empêchait pas les autres? Ou bien encore par quelle puissance extraordinaire elle était en nature, et tantôt elle cessait d'être. (2.6.104)

D'Aubignac appears totally baffled by this choice of staging. He has a similar reaction to the moment in which Pyrame laments and then stabs himself. He observes that actors should not lament extensively in cases of dramatic irony where the audience knows the subject of the *plainte* is based on unfounded conjecture:

Que si par la suite et la nécessité de l'histoire le spectateur doit savoir une chose contraire à la créance de l'acteur, comme par exemple, qu'une princesse est vivante, encore que son amant la croit morte; si l'on veut qu'une passion réussisse

> en la bouche de cet amant, il ne faut pas qu'il fasse une longue plainte mêlée de sentiments de tendresse et de douleur; mais il faut d'abord le mettre dans la fureur, et prêt de se tuer lui-même, afin que les spectateurs, qui ne seraient pas touchez des plaintes qu'il pourrait faire, soient émeus d'une crainte bien pressante par le violent désespoir, (4.7.332)

D'Aubignac seems to be writing at a time in which the audience could no longer take pleasure in watching extended scenes of individuals under a misapprehension. This phenomenon is in stark contrast to plays in earlier decades in which main characters were demonstrably insane or under a spell during the majority of the action of the play.[14] By the time D'Aubignac writes, these moments could be pleasurable only if brief and somewhat realistic. He later observes that some brief presentation of a character under a mistaken impression, while not *vraisemblable* enough to move the audience emotionally, could be pleasurably regarded as "une feinte bien ajustée" (4.7.334). Such is not the case for *Pyrame et Thisbé*:

> comme nous l'avons remarqué dans la tragédie de *Pyrame et de Thisbé*, où cet amant fait un grand discours sur les conjectures qu'il a qu'une lionne a dévoré sa maitresse; mais un discours, quoi qu'excellent, peu sensible aux spectateurs, qui savent bien que Thisbé n'est pas morte (4.7.332)

Interestingly, though tirades and misunderstandings had gone out of favor, despair and potential violence could still move the spectators because of the visceral nature of bodily suffering:

[14] For example *L'Hypochondriaque*, *La Bague d'oubli*, and *L'Illusion comique.*

> et sitôt qu'il prend son épée pour s'immoler aux mânes de celle qui l'avait prévenu, et laver sa négligence dans son propre sang, il n'y a pas un des spectateurs qui ne frémisse; (4.7.333)

The moment he draws the knife, it becomes viscerally present for the spectators, highlighting the effectiveness of the dagger even when this play was tragically outdated in every other respect. He goes on to describe one particularly naïve young spectator:

> et j'ai vu dans cette occasion une jeune fille qui n'avait encore jamais été à la comédie, dire à sa mère, qu'il fallait l'avertir que sa maitresse n'était pas morte; tant il est vrai que ce moment portait les spectateurs dans les intérêts de ce personnage! (4.7.334)

For D'Aubignac, daggers sustain dramatic illusion and its "crainte bien pressante." This is his subjective reading of the audience's collective shuddering; extrapolating from what the young girl said, he tries to read the mind of the whole audience. It is equally possible that the audience was horrified or tantalized. Horror is a visceral, literally hair-raising repulsion, commonly associated in the early modern period with shuddering. The *Trésor de la langue francaise* describes it as "hérissement, frissonnement; frisson d'effroi; frisson religieux" and cites Maurice Scève's 1547 usage in *Saulsaye* as meaning a "frisson." The *Émile Littré: Dictionnaire de la langue française (1872-77)* describes it in a similar way, citing examples from Bossuet and Boileau. Furthermore, D'Aubignac did not consider the ways in which daggers could also bypass or confuse dramatic illusion. Boileau pinpoints the way in which this dagger is not nearly as realistic as one may think. He finds the metaphor of the blushing dagger as a distraction, artificial and "cold" (Boileau 2). At a further historical remove, reading a text rather than watching or hearing

a play, he recognizes how the dagger was not presented "realistically" but misunderstands how this emotional valence constituted a different understanding of theater and the role of the object.

Daggers, specifically, catalyze action onstage and are an effective means of creating terror and horror for the spectator as well. In the most crucial moments of drama, especially gory tragedy, daggers were never merely props. They were, or appeared to be, dangerous objects that could potentially cause real harm to the actor, troubling dramatic illusion. Prop daggers, even poorly rendered, looked so like real-life counterparts that, in a society recovering from successive political assassinations, their repeated appearance onstage would have likely been triggering. Christophe Angebault takes into consideration the meaning and use of daggers by looking at contemporary expressions of shame and collective trauma.

> Dans *Pyrame et Thisbé*, la pointe, par son exagération, paraît ainsi destinée à frapper l'imagination et à provoquer la remémoration obsessionnelle de la honte. L'image du poignard rougissant, quoique détachée de la scène guerrière, fonctionne comme une marque traumatique des guerres civiles, *entraînant à la fois honte et compulsion de répétition.* (96, italics mine)

In effect, the reason why daggers were so shocking and powerful in this play was precisely why Boileau found them so troubling. The aesthetic of daggers, as well as that of blood, produced strong affective responses in the audience in a variety of plays of this period. Rather than reflecting trauma these plays instrumentalized it.

Moreover, knives themselves, by their mere presence onstage, heighten tension and elicit fear and horror. Some work on Elizabethan drama gestures towards this

connection:

> On Marlowe's stage, cutting and stabbing instruments assert meanings beyond mere stage property to elicit neuro-sensory muscular reactions in the audience; actions of fear and distress that occur prior to intellectual perception and that produce radical tensions beyond moral pedagogy, analogues of Artaud or Seneca. (Bowers 19).

Daggers were specific, recognizable emotional catalyzers. During the period 1580-1620, when the audience saw a dagger, it was likely to end up in someone's chest. They facilitate and amplify confusion between real and mimetic. In doing so, they create communities of spectators who shuddered together, whether in fear and pity or other, less cathartic emotions such as horror, shame, or guilt. These reactions conditioned and informed the aesthetic of these plays. Daggers, in all their repetitiveness and predictability, work in this way in *Pyrame et Thisbé*, *Scédase*, and *Didon se sacrifiant*.

Pyrame et Thisbé features a double suicide and therefore two references to the fatal dagger. Pyrame describes the dagger as "de quoi venger les injures du sort; / c'est ici mon tonnerre, et mon gouffre, et ma mort" (5.1.1109-1110). This *pointe* is at least as "cold" as Thisbé's similar remarks. Pyrame is conflating his dagger with the thunder, abyss, and death he had asked for just prior in his lengthy monologue.

> Au dessein de *mourir* dois-je chercher qui m'aide ?
> Rien que ma main ne s'offre à ce dernier remède.
> Terre, si tu voulais *t'ouvrir dessous mes pas*,
> Tu me ferais plaisir, mais tu ne le fais pas ;
> Il semble que ton flanc davantage se serre.

Dieux ! *si vous me vouliez envoyer le tonnerre*,

Je vous serais tenu…(5.1.1097-1104, italics mine)

The play is filled with moments in which characters conflate animate and inanimate objects, and anthropomorphize both living and nonliving things (Dalla Valle 113-16). When we understand sacrificial logic, we see that it is the ritual practice of attributing affect and agency to objects that enables the sacrifice to take place and gives individuals a fleeting sense of self-mastery.

When Thisbé comes upon her dead lover and sees the dagger that killed him, her reaction demonstrates that daggers speak a kind of language or conjure a kind of emotional response that catalyzes violence. She is simply performing the same attribution of affect and efficacy that Pyrame did. Thisbé's death scene represents a more extreme example of the attribution of affect to objects. It is similar to Pyrame's in several respects, but differs in the way in which she consistently projects her agency as well as her guilt onto the weapon. Never the means by which she commits self-murder, it is her murderer. Like Pyrame, she describes her guilt at causing her beloved's death (5. 2. 1177). In the same way, she first looks to an external force both to punish her and to take away her guilty torment with her life: "Que je sente à la fois, poison, flammes, et fers!/ Sus! Qui me vient ouvrir la porte des Enfers" (5. 2. 1225-1226). Unlike Pyrame, Thisbé never goes from being a murderer to being a victim, and never speaks directly about the reality of her pain except to lament that she merits more. When she picks up Pyrame's dagger, she does not view it as the means by which she will take her own life. Instead, she imagines it to be a murderer whom she will invite to murder her:

Ha! Voici le poignard qui du sang de son maître

S'est souillé lâchement, il en rougit, le traitre!

Exécrable bourreau! Si tu veux te laver

Du crime commencé, tu n'as qu'à l'achever; (5. 2.1226-1230).

Thisbé is projecting her own guilt onto the weapon her lover used to commit suicide. In stating that the weapon will wash away its guilt in her blood, she is talking, in the most indirect way, about her own guilt and the means by which she must purge herself of it in her own tainted blood. Thisbé never directly acknowledges the psychological torment her guilt is causing her, nor does she directly discuss the pain she experiences. In the latter case, she presents herself as egging the dagger on, encouraging it to cause her more and more pain. Still addressing the dagger, she says: "Enfonce là-dedans, rends-toi plus rude, et pousse/ Des feux avec ta lame! Hélas, elle est trop douce!" (5.2.1231-1232). In her final lines, she laments that her death is the gentlest possible, and that she wishes that the gods would have sent her a more protracted and extreme form of suffering: "Je ne pouvais mourrir d'un coup plus gracieux./ Ni pour un autre objet haïr celui des Cieux" (5.2.1231-1234). The "coup gracieux" is the stabbing she just administered to herself. "Celui des Cieux" is the death (*poison*, *flammes*, and *fers*) that the heavens apparently did not send. At no point does she describe her physical pain, only its absence or insufficiency. She is a totalitarian regime unto herself. As Scarry argues:

> All of those ways in which the torturer dramatizes his opposition to and distance from the prisoner are ways of dramatizing his distance from the body. The most radical act of distancing resides in his disclaiming of the other's hurt (57).

Thisbé's language is totally caught up in the kind of rhetoric of torture that informs descriptions of weapons in many of these plays. The sight of Pyrame's mutilated body

appears to have unleashed a frenzy of violent emotional contagion, and she cycles between contemplating Pyrame's mutilated body, the weapon, her guilt, and her death. Like in many plays of this period, once one violent action is committed, it frequently accelerates and compounds itself.

These lines attribute sacrificial efficacy to an object upon which characters project the pain they anticipate. Addressing daggers in this way allows characters to contemplate the world-destroying pain they inflict on themselves, justifying it as ritual sacrifice. This personification in particular is ironic because by means of it they too become inanimate objects. Dalla Valle considers this correspondence to be arbitrary and artificial, created in order to underline the facticity of the play's many personifications (117). To me, we can generalize, concluding that when a character brandishes and addresses a dagger, their words often indicate how the object is already encoded with the ideology of sacrifice.

Descriptions of daggers can simultaneously reveal certain things such as shame or guilt while dissimulating others, such as the torture these objects performed. Luc Percheron's *Pyrrhe* uses the motif popularized later by Théophile of the dagger that reddens (or not) with shame and blood to describe his matricide

> Voici le même fer qui rougit inhumain
> Dans le sang maternel; le sanglant Aeacide
> Ne doit ensanglanter un fer moins homicide (41[15])

Here Oreste states that weapon with which he murdered his mother is most appropriate for the death of inhumane murderer Pyrrhe, attributing the physical weapon with the guilt of his actions. He appears to not desire to purge his matricidal guilt so much as to pair a

[15] Since this play lacks line numbers, I use page numbers.

murderous dagger with an equally murderous victim. In Hardy's *La mort d'Achille*, Paris describes the dagger as a replacement for the bride Polyxène Achille was promised:

> Non, barbare, tu vas ton guerdon recevoir
>
> Voici, méchant, voici l'Épouse méritée,
>
> Une dague émoulue en ta gorge planté"(4.2.1340-1343)

Here Paris dissimulates the pain this pointed dagger causes by referring to it as a fitting wife for the murderous Achille. Stabbing becomes a perverse marriage ritual in which the victim Achille becomes "one flesh" with the weapon that kills him. In these and other plays, the language that directly and indirectly qualifies daggers also points to the means by which these objects absorbed and evoked a whole variety of emotions.

Similar to daggers, the presence of altars onstage served as an effective emotional catalyzer. Scholars of renaissance and medieval drama consider the altar to be a set piece in the plays of their respective periods. For Élie Konigson, altars were a set piece, in medieval drama's mythical space (21). Both temples and altars were an important feature of many of these plays, and that their visual cues thematized a stark division between pagan and Christian (239-66). Altars featured prominently in renaissance humanist drama as well (Lawrenson 370). Whether or not sacrifices were represented on these altars over the course of every play that featured them, they conjured the related emotions merely by being present onstage. This function continued late into the classical period. In early to mid-seventeenth-century plays the altar, as well as the oracle and priest, conjured the emotions associated with potential sacrifice (Marchal-Ninosque 37). The late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries prove to be lacunae in this otherwise continuous theater historiography.

A brief analysis of *Le mémoire de Mahelot* shows numerous examples of temples and altars (Eckey 263-324; Mahelot 78-102). This is significant because we have extremely limited information on the staging of plays between 1580 and 1620. *Le mémoire de Mahelot* recorded the props and décor of theater beginning in the 1630s, when this aesthetic of violence began its decline. Alan Howe makes several helpful assertions in his introduction to *Didon se sacrifiant* about how we can extrapolate from the *Mémoire de Mahelot* to an actual staging of a play in which an altar featured prominently**.** Pairing this information with a careful study of language in the play, he extrapolates from related plays and their staging to demonstrate that the *bûcher* would likely have been dramatically "revealed" just prior to Didon's suicide, gesturing toward the visual rhetorical importance of the grave or altar as an emotional catalyzer:

> Finalement, l'héroïne se tue devant les yeux des spectateurs. "Il faut un bûcher, que l'on fait paraitre au cinquième acte": cet indice de Mahelot pour une pièce perdue de Hardy aurait pu servir pour Didon. On lève une décoration pour révéler le bucher […]. Les spectateurs voyaient aussi un "autel bien paré" (v 1785) pour le sacrifice. Le texte de Hardy permet de croire que, comme dans *Eneide* (IV, 645-646, 685), Didon devait monter sur le haut du bucher avant de s'adresser aux "dépouilles" d'Énée (v. 1831) […]. Montée sur le bucher, Didon se sert du glaive d'Énée pour se sacrifier, et les comédiens n'auraient pas caché au public "le sang à gros bouillons versé" les notices de Mahelot prévoyaient pour les scènes de ce genre "du sang, des éponges, une petite peau," et même "une épée qui se démonte" (78-79).

Howe is able to extrapolate a great deal of information about the absent scene of sacrifice

in *Didon* by a canny analysis of both internal *didascalies* and extant information about the *recettes* used to create these effects. The scene onstage would have been fairly graphic. The collapsing sword when pressed against what appears to be a bloody sponge housed in a leak-resistant animal skin would have created a convincing rendering of sword entering the character's chest, followed by spurting blood. These and related scenes in other plays were made to be explicitly violent as well as spectacular. In *Scédase*, Hardy renders the scene of the eponymous character killing himself as spectacular as possible. He varies from the source text by describing the suicide as a sacrifice. The language he uses also "reveals," though too late, the location's sacrificial function, increasing the suspense over time.

> Accompagnez, amis, le misérable père
> Qui de toute justice humaine se désespère,
> Qui va voir si là-bas en l'éternelle nuit
> Sa plainte repoussée aura point plus de fruit.
> Allègres, prêtez-moi cette dernière peine,
> Peine de pitié que de labeur pleine,
> Telle voyage fini sur le proche tombeau
> Qui mes filles ravit en leur âge plus beau (5.1309-1316)

First he calls his friends to come serve as witnesses, and then makes several references to suicide. We should note that *désespoir* had suicidal connotations during the early modern period (Minois 25). He again asks his friends to watch what he qualifies as an act of pity. Only once does he mention the tomb on which he plans to kill himself. The chorus reacts to these words (5.1317-1320), but they still hold back long enough for Scédase to

continue his ritual sacrifice, even marveling at the shock that immobilizes them (5. 1341-1344). The presence of the chorus, and the way in which its members express their foreboding, calls the theater audience to witness a suicide that they too are powerless to interrupt.

Graves and daggers all inspire the audience with fear and illustrate how violence catalyzes action within the plays themselves. Sacrifice combines all of these props in a ritual production with an even larger impact on the characters in the plays and the spectators outside it. However, we need to distinguish two types of sacrifices onstage, building from Marchal-Ninosque's distinction between profane and sacred sacrifices which she notes in the eighteenth century. In the case of the play I discuss, "profane" sacrifices combine some of the above props and some "scripted" language. They increase a general sense of danger and further catalyze the action of the plays, but they are inauspicious, feigned or a convenient cover for mere violence. "Sacred" sacrifices occur in Act Five and initiate a transaction that guarantees that violence will continue to occur outside the scope of the play. These plays create an ambiance of violence we can consider as "viral." They created horror in the spectator and contribute to a sense of doom. These cliffhanger endings also gestured towards future plays on the same theme. Ostensibly, sixteenth- and seventeenth-century audiences would have been able to differentiate sacred sacrifices from profane ones. They existed in stark contrast to one another, the former possibly helping to render the latter more sacred through their dissimilarity. For our purposes, studying profane sacrifices allows us to demystify sacred ones.

A series of violent acts, often described as sacrifices, exacerbate and extend the sacrificial crisis. Some sacrifices we may characterize as "profane," meaning that the

self-interested nature of their actions strongly suggests that they use the language of sacrifice glibly to give their actions justification. For instance, Iarbe, Didon's scorned and vengeful suitor, invokes the gods against Enée, Didon, and their respective peoples, but makes no offering. As he fulminates, he resolves to take vengeance into his own hands, and the ritual appears to serve as a justification.

Embrasé de fureur, de vengeance, & de haine,
Au pied de tes Autels, Majesté souveraine,
Puissant Olympien, je t'adresse ma voix, (2.1.285-287)

In effect, Iarbe wants Jupiter to exact vengeance in order to "prove" that Iarbe is truly his son (2.1. 288-311). His supplications to Jupiter his father have as their object not the death of Didon, but the annihilation of her people and that of Ænée (2.1.314-315). At the same time, Iarbe recognizes that he can effectuate this act of vengeance himself, doing so having the added benefit of "proving" his divine ascendance through his martial prowess.

Quel besoin de prière, & d'épandre des vœux?
Je le puis de moi-même, & sais que tu le veux
Ministre de lui le mérité supplice,
Deux peuples étrangers nos communs ennemis
Périront pour le rapt de mes amours commis (2.1.312-315)

This invocation merely demonstrates Iarbe's desire to take vengeance into his own hands. He makes a perfunctory request or rather an endorsement from the Gods for the plan he makes. This alteration cannot be found in any extant source text for Hardy's *Didon*. Another source, Du Bellay's 1552 translation, renders this episode faithfully (Du Bellay 31-32). Etienne Jodelle's circa 1555 version of the play, as well as Ludovico Dolce's

1560 version, resemble Du Bellay's version in this regard. Iarbe is merely a faraway military threat. He is mentioned twice in Dolce's version (I.1.149, 156) and twice in Jodelle's version (1. 156, 211[16]) but appears in neither. If the decorator may well have adorned the altar with offerings mentioned in Virgil's work (Howe 77), Iarbe does not refer to any offerings in particular, nor is there any discernible sacrificial transaction occurring in the scene. This textual lacuna constitutes a significant difference from the sacrificial enactments that are complemented by verbal descriptions. Moreover, unlike the pivotal role Iarbus's supplications have in the *Aeneid*, here Iarbe's supposed invocation does not cause Jupiter to send Mercury down to earth to set off the fatal chain reaction, as is the case in the *Aeneid*'s book four (409, 411). In this play Ænée has made his decision to leave in Act One scene one (145-148), prior to Iarbe's entry onstage in Act Two Mercure appears briefly at the beginning of Act Four to speed up the Troyan's departure with a warning against Didon's imminent vengeance. In the *Aeneid*, by way of contrast, Mercury must give a searing harangue about Aeneas' womanly languor and dereliction of duty in order to convince him to leave Carthage (413).

Profane sacrifices reveal how seductive the rhetoric of sacrifice appears to those under its spell. While appearing to contain potential violence, these acts invariably exacerbate crisis. They illustrate the way in which these characters attribute positive benefit or efficacy to an action that is merely a simple exchange. As such, they catalyze action and illustrate how violence replicates itself virally. Significantly, Iarbe does not plan to exact revenge from Didon; rather the objects of his proposed violence are the Carthaginians and Trojans in their entirety.

[16] This play lacking line numbers, I substitute page numbers.

J'irai de fond en comble (entreprise trop vile)

Ces Troyens sagmentés, exterminer sa ville;

Et quant à l'impudique, en des fers vergogneux,

La supplice borner d'un refus dédaigneux (2.1.357-360)

This scene in Act Two serves to heighten the atmosphere of looming crisis and doom for the community in general. Didon here is merely threatened with the possibility of being chained and publicly shamed like Cleopatra. The play is replete with profanely enacted or otherwise inefficacious ritual sacrifices or promises of sacrifice. Invariably they serve to reinforce the sense that danger looms evermore menacingly on the horizon. They also highlight, in Didon's mind at least, her culpability and inevitable death. Didon bargains for divine intervention to keep Ænée from leaving, multiplying an increasing number of inefficatious sacrifices. Supplicating Junon and Ericine (Venus), she promises them newly-invented sacrifices of unprecedented proportions (3.2.995-1012). Didon's sister Anne presents herself as a victim or offering. In Act One she offers Junon her heart (1.2.229-230). At the end of Act Three, she goes to offer herself to Aenée as an "esclave et victime" (3.2.979). Then, when Dido describes the ritual that she secretly plans to be her suicide, Anne says she will not spare her blood and her pains to make the sacrifice work: "Je ne voudrais non mon sang, non ma peine épargner" (2.2.1449). These sacrifices merely exacerbate increasing tension, and convince the eponymous character to search for still more drastic sacrificial measures.

The logic of sacrificial language proves infectious in other plays as well. In *Scédase*, the youths discuss and execute their plan to rape Scédase's daughters using the language as a kind of private sacrifice. Superficially, we can read this play as merely

conforming to Girard's theory of sacrifice. The play does contain several examples of murders euphemistically described as sacrifices. Charilas and Euribiade refer to Scédase's family home as a "temple" (2.2.345, 3.1.689), and the young women who inhabit it as "divine" (2.2.337). Eventually their many mythological comparisons center on their plan to rape and murder these women.

In Act Three scene one, Euribiade, having resolved with Charilas to seduce or rape Évéxipe and Théane, describes their bumbling tutor Iphicrate's departure as his exclusion from a "sacrifice" they are about to enact:

> Fui, fui, profane, à toi n'appartient d'assister
> Le sacrifice, auquel tu voulus résister
> Fui, fui, profane exclus par les ans du mystère
> Qu'a la dive, on prépare, adorée en Cythère (615-618)

Their language never wavers in its allusive connotations even during their violent crimes. Charilas, more resistant to violence, still uses the language of sacrifice when he asks Évéxipe for forgiveness just before murdering her (3. 2. 817). While we can doubt the sincerity of their ritual language, its use illustrates the way in which these plays theorize stage violence as virally contagious and how sacrifice seduces and solidifies communities, even those having only two particularly vile individuals. Violence inevitably amplifies as it replicates itself over time and space. This sacrifice, or violent spectacle, also has this contagious effect. The young men are highly conscious of the visual or theatrical component of their actions and the way in which one violent action leads to another. Euribiade points to Charilas as he rapes Évéxipe, informing Théane that this "example" excuses his actions:

Tu vois que cela m'est par exemple permis,

Que demeurer oisif reprocherait ma flamme

D'excessive froidure (3.2.768-770)

Euribiade is not caught up in the contagious nature of violence, but in reflecting coldly on his actions he recognizes what an unpremeditated crime looks like and organizes his actions accordingly. When he kills Théane, he encourages Charilas to do the same to Évéxipe, saying: "Poursuis. Courage, un chef de l'hydre est abattu" (3.2.816). By dehumanizing Théane, he reduces the impact of the frightfulness of seeing murder and dead bodies, at least for Euribiade. This is not a real sacrifice. Nothing besides a glib excuse for rape and murder are gained and the gods are uninvolved.

Similarly, Paris and Deiphobe plan to "sacrifice" Achille, even though their plan is clearly a premeditated murder that happens to occur in a temple. Paris relishes the thought of imagining Achilles' sprawled dead body run through with a dagger: "D'un poignard traversé sur le carreau l'étendre" (4.1.933). Deiphobe's response conveys a similar enthusiasm: "Venez au petit pas, vous n'aurez à l'autel/ Qu'au Taureau preparé donner le coup mortel" (4.1.935-936). This rich vocabulary of stabbing is intimately associated with the language of sacrifice, in this example "autel" and "Taureau preparé." Tellingly, their "sacrifice" is particularly unsatisfying. The moment of punishment continues countless times. As Achille shouts "au secours, je suis mort" (4.1.1343-1344), they stab him again and again. Paris repeats phrases that suggest he is in the process of administering one more stab: "Tu mourras, tu mourras, s'en est fait." Moments later, he claims that just one more stab will appease his anger: "Ce coup assouvera mon reste de courrous" (4.1.1348). Then he immediately harasses a clearly dying Achille before giving

him one more stab as a memento:

> Va-t-en plaindre là-bas
>
> Va conter à Pluton l'honneur de tes combats ;
>
> Mais qu'un plus fin que tuy (sic) dépouille leur couronne,
>
> Voici de souvenir l'arre que je te donne (4.1.1352-1354).

This lack of resolution continues into the next scene, which as Cavaillé succinctly demonstrates is one of perfunctory deploration followed by an extended debate on the eponymous character's many faults. It also gestures towards the viral, endless cycle of violence that looms on the horizon of all of these plays, even as they show how, in the short term, this violence creates and solidifies communities. Charilas and Euribiade, just as much as Paris and Deiphobe, bond over their acts of gang violence. In the long term, in many cases, especially for the contemporary theater adaptations of Virgilian and other Roman sources, these plays end before the myths upon which they are based have a chance to reach a stopping point. Even to a theater-goer unfamiliar with the details of the *Aeneid*, the names *Hector*, *Achille*, *Polyxene*, and *Pyrrhe* are a such a constant in many plays of the period that the cycle of retributive violence in which they are engaged would have been apparent. Profane sacrifices illustrate how infectious and pernicious violence is and how seductive its narrative of efficacy can be. These are sacrifices the audience witnessed from the outside without being affected by them. Sacred sacrifices, on the other hand, are presented in such a way as to make their capacity for danger and their sacrificial efficacy as viable-seeming as possible. Rather than motivating the plot, these enactments initiate this cycle of violence, ensuring that it continues beyond the scope of the individual plays in question.

In “sacred” sacrifices, there is the presumption of a real exchange with the gods. The victims/sacrificers find their way to a grave or altar and the sacrificer draws a dagger, which is imbued with force, agency, and even emotion. The element of surprise and shock are played up by visual and discursive revelations, often in the moment this dagger is drawn. The sacrificer explicitly describes the nature of their offering and its expected return. They are initiating a kind of transaction using language to contextualize the importance of each step of the process. The sacrifices during Act Five are sacred, whole, efficacious acts that extend and exacerbate the sacrificial crisis even while having the appearance of resolving some short-term crises. They also are presented as serving the greater good, or gesturing to a world and time outside themselves. Superficially, the ritual in these plays appears to contain and re-channel violent potentiality in a way similar to what Girard describes. The profane sacrifices especially lend themselves to this analysis. However, as I will show, the sacrifices in Act V of these plays are of a different kind entirely.

In *Didon se sacrifiant*, a veritable sacrificial crisis emerges after Ænée abandons Didon. In a sacrificial crisis the community perceives an imminent threat of escalating violence and searches for a suitable sacrificial surrogate (Girard 63-101). Over the course of the play, Didon emerges as the imminently sacrificial object. She has all the necessary qualities of a sacrificial surrogate (Girard 27-28). A courageous and beautiful queen, her relationship with Ænée tarnishes her reputation as a chaste widow and provokes an impending invasion by her neighbor Iarbus. She also has no firm footing in any kinship network. A Phoenician settler, she is a foreigner to northern Africa, and a distraction from Ænée’s project to marry on the Italian peninsula and to found Rome. For all these

reasons, Didon suffers, laments, and blames herself while at the same time asserting her status as a brave queen and heretofore loyal widow. This crisis is extended rather than resolved by Didon's sacrificial suicide.

Superficially, there are elements of the death scene that support Girard's theory of sacrifice. Didon's death is protracted and her body suffers almost indefinitely. She stabs herself just after her final line: "Sus, perdons la douleur, la lumière, et la voix" (5.1.1851). The chorus has time to recognize she is in the process of stabbing herself, but not fast enough to stop her: "Ô prodige effroyable! Courons, pour retenir sa dextre impitoyable! " (5.1.1852-1853). Then Barcé her nurse describes how her soul leaves her body with her blood: "Hélas, il n'est plus temps. Ce beau sein traversé,/ L'âme fuit dans le sang à gros bouillons versé" (5.1.1853-1854) We may think of this line as the moment of death, since Safty describes it as occurring here with the effusion of blood (117-118) , but the moment is indefinite. For instance, when Didon's sister arrives and discovers what had just happened, she goes to her and tries to speak to her before she dies. "Pardonne-moi, ma sœur. Avant que trépasser," (5.1.1873, italics mine). The moment of death itself is both protracted and absent. In the original, a goddess intervenes and we know when she dies (693). In Hardy's version there is no such moment, even though the suicide is highly spectacular. Such an amplification in this scene places the accent on bodily suffering rather than death, rendering the scene similar to Girard's analysis of stage versions of *Oedipus* as constituting sacrificial surrogation.

Didon's suicide-qua-sacrifice does resolve a certain number of problems. Besides appearing to put an end to Didon's suffering, it also apparently resolves a political crisis. News of Didon's suicide quelled Iarbe's vendetta. A messenger from Iarbe's advancing

troops who witnessed the suicide/sacrifice delivers the following message:

> Sans doute qu'au rapport d'un accident mortel.
>
> Quelque reste d'amour lui arrache des larmes,
>
> Lui fait tomber du poing ces vengeresses armes,
>
> Qui dévoient du Troyen, et d'elle triompher,
>
> L'un emporté de l'onde, et cette-ci du fer (5.1.2022-2026)

Her suicidal "fer" is certainly a nobler end than the "fers verogneux" to which Iarbe had planned to reduce her (2.1.359). In a sense this ending does constitute a somewhat effective resolution, satisfying Didon's honor and appearing to rechannel the violence that menaced the community. However, this sacrifice, in what it requests of the gods in exchange for Didon's violent suffering and death, reinscribes a cycle of violence.

When we look at what Didon requests, it is clear that she desires to continue the cycle of violence beyond the time frame of the play. Furthermore, the specific things that she requests would have been recognizable to an early seventeenth-century audience. Carthage indeed would continue to war with Rome. Hannibal was commonly understood to be Didon's descendant. Ænée's death is nowhere described in the *Aeneid*, leading many scholars to believe the lacuna implies an adverse judgment of the figure, therefore rendering her curse plausible.[17] Unbeknownst to her, Didon is initiating a string of events that will leave Carthage in ruins, redirecting the violent potentiality back onto her own people. In this way, the cycle of violence continues and there is no resolution resulting from her suicide.

[17] See Hilgar and Panoussi.

Importantly, Didon also requests that Rome be destroyed. While Hannibal's efforts failed, an early modern audience would have been hyperaware of the image of Rome as a ruin. Not only did Du Bellay and other renaissance poets describe Rome's decrepitude in detail, but this understanding extended to the popular imagination as well. While glorious, the Roman Empire was simultaneously perceived during the late Renaissance as ruined and corrupted by greed and thirst for violence (McGowan 279-81). Furthermore, as Margaret McGowan notes, playwrights such as Garnier made an explicit connection between Rome's foundation on violence and destruction by violence

> The reader/spectator knows that Rome was born from the former [Troy], that Trojan blood at one and the same time built the city and infected it with the seeds of disaster, and that Rome itself annihilated Carthage and now meets the same fate (278).

Therefore, invoking Rome as always-already a ruin would have been a salient and concrete "proof" of the efficacy of Didon's request.

These plays end with future war looming on the horizon instead of rechanneling it onto the sacrificial surrogate. They redirect it onto yet another surrogate. As I noted above, in *Didon se sacrifiant* the eponymous character commits suicide in order to guarantee that her descendants will continue their war with Rome. Other plays end on similar cliffhangers, sometimes explicitly indicating that the sacrifice just enacted will bring about an endless series of reprisals. In *Scédase*, for instance, the eponymous character commits suicide so that the gods will avenge his death. Implicitly or explicitly, these sacrifices often redirected the violence back onto the community in question. They also, conveniently, redirected away from the unassailable male figures with authority and

exceptionally good bloodlines, most closely resemble the ideal French monarch.

In *Scédase*, the eponymous character invokes the Gods to remember his daughters and avenge their deaths, offering himself as a sacrifice to mark and honor their tomb:

Autres effusions que moi je ne t'apporte.
Vous n'aurez, chastes corps ici dedans reclus,
Des hosties, des vœux, des honneurs superflus
Je suis, hélas, la brebis qui s'immole!
Mais paravant qu'a vous descendre, vaine idole,
Célestes, exaucez ma suppliante voix?
Contre ces infracteurs de vos plus saintes lois
Contre ces fiers tyrans qui foulent l'innocence
Et sur notre ruine érigent leur puissance.
Grands Dieux, faites qu'un jour le leuctrique couroux,
Ses nourrissons venus en la presse des coups,
Jette Sparte à l'envers, dessous le joug réduite
D'un qui de nos Thébains aura pris la conduite! (5.2.1324-1334)

His final line, "C'en est fait à ce coup" (1340), endorses his supplication as well as ends his suffering. This is as close as this play can get to tyrannicide. Only the gods can avenge Scédase and his daughters, conveniently at a far-removed time. Worse, in requesting civil war as punishment, Scédase is also bringing violence back to his own community, even if his people prove victorious. Ultimately, this strategy diffuses responsibility and redirects violent potential consequences away from the perpetrators and unjust rulers alike. The audience may have shared a collective sense of anticipation

about the looming war Scédase described. In placing it at the heart of a ritual act, the real suffering of his body is eclipsed by a narrative about supposed future justice. The only sure thing that results from Scédase's suicide is his death, but, in rendering it a sacrifice, it becomes one poignant moment in an endless narrative of compensatory violence. These plays cannot be reduced to whatever moral message they may contain. Instead, they creatively adapt or "contaminate" many literary works, cultural touchstones, and linguistic registers in order to carve out a place for a variety of royal and non-royal figures in the popular imagination. These plays exhibit their suffering bodies as a way to cultivate a kind of spectatorship motivated by pity and piety. They dissimulate the terror they inflict on the spectator, but hint at the ways in which this terror is constructed and the seductive, viral nature of its presentation.

While their ritualized, performative stabbing seems to exemplify many aspects of Girard's concept of sacrificial crisis, these plays thus complicate a stable notion of resolution upon which the Girardian model insists. Scholarship on early modern French theater does not sufficiently address the mechanics of how this ritualized violence worked on the spectator, why stabbing was distinct from other forms of stage violence, or why it was a compelling, recognizable trope over the course of a forty year period. Particularly when discussing violence and the degree to which theater channels its potentiality, established scholarship often focuses on anxieties surrounding kingship, often positing it is as the misrecognized motivation for this stage violence, theorizing stage violence as a way to figure epistemic rupture. In my introduction, I build on these arguments, illustrating ways in which these plays, even the most iconoclastic, rupture-inducing, deflect away from scenes of tyrannicide. This chapter has considered the individuals onto

whom the violent potentiality is redirected. It also theorizes that this violence is viral because it creates a seductive but ultimately false sense of agency in tragic, heroic individuals.

The plethora of plays sharing the rhetoric of stabbing suggests this violence is viral, spreading among plays and becoming a subgenre unto itself. This type of violence suggests but never fully provides resolution. Instead of containing potential social violence, as Girardian theory would postulate, its repetitive form and the way it produces ambivalence and constant violence on the horizon perpetuate the rhetoric of stabbing. In some respects, this viral violence constitutes a different aesthetic of violence, privileging a stronger, more immediate reaction from the audience. It is also possible that making plays that deflect away from tyrannicide so virally violent may have had the effect of terrorizing the spectators, showing them how invulnerable tyrants were and how non-royal figures would fare when in conflict with them. Or it may have simply been a way to work through collective anxieties concerning kingship's hidden, perennial fallibility.

Post-script: Neoclassical Stabbing, or What's So Tragic about Peace, Love, and Understanding?

The period following *Pyrame et Thisbé*'s first performance constituted a dramatic shift in the possible range of theatrical effects. Much of this change occurred retroactively. Both Pierre Corneille and Georges de Scudéry retroactively censored their work featuring stabbing. Corneille blames the actress playing Camille in *Horace* for not leaving the stage, resulting in her murder onstage. Also, the first productions of *La mort de César* in 1635 feature the assassination on-stage, and the decorous drop in of the

curtain was added in the 1636 print edition. As the period progressed, tragedies began to implement some of the stagecraft in pastorals of the period. Not only did pastoral dramas suspend the dagger above the heads of its protagonists, but tragedy too featured a plethora of abortive sacrifices. Rotrou's *Iphigénie*, as Marchal-Ninosque observes, features the would-be *sacrifitateur* Calchas prominently on stage to add to the drama (38). Other important elements such as a sword, dagger, and altar were used (Vuillermoz 283). More significantly, the sacrifice almost happens but does not. Iphigenie stands before the altar and Calchas raises his dagger and invokes the goddess Diana (Rotrou 113-14). As the century progressed, these same catalyzers are present, but they are implemented for different reasons. Some of the recognizable catalyzers are moved offstage, including explicit scenes of physical suffering and dead bodies. However, this change is merely a different kind of control exerted over the objects and subjects that have catalyzing potential.

The rhetoric of stabbing persists into the late 1630s, albeit in an attenuated form. *Le Cid* features a sword dripping with blood, signifying by extension Don Rodrigue's guilt. There is no conflation of the physical and metaphysical, as there is in the line "Il en rougit, le traitre" that almost certainly inspired it. However, the bloody object reminds Chimène of Don Rodrigue's crime:

CHIMÈNE :

ôte-moi cet objet odieux,

Qui reproche ton crime et ta vie à mes yeux

RODRIGUE :

Regarde-le plutôt pour exciter ta haine,

Pour croître ta colère, et pour hâter ma peine.

(3.4.16-19)

The object is meant to catalyze violence, but it ultimately fails. The presence of the sword operates partly the way it did in earlier dramas. Looking at the sword, Chimène is meant to comment on the crime associated with it. When Don Rodrigue tells Chimène to look at the sword in order to steel herself and inspire her desire for revenge, it is similar to the way in which Didon contemplates Ænée's sword while she prepares for death. Don Rodrigue's instruction to Chimène to stab him with his own sword is also similar to the way in which, in the previous decades, those contemplating stabbing considered the act as one of purging guilt by replacing one person's blood, killed unjustly, with that of another as occurs in *Pyrrhe*. Don Rodrigue echoes this trope when he instructs her to "Plonge-le dans le mien, Et fais-lui perdre ainsi la teinture du tien" (3.4.20-21). Pre-classical logic persists in these plays. Rather than being decontextualized or demystified, it is simply rendered insufficient and constitutes an imperfect means of effectuating resolution.

Were Chimène to follow Don Rodrigue's directions, she would satisfy her desire for revenge and yet persist as a remainder. As lacking in *bienséance* as this play might be, *Le Cid* eschews spectacular stabbing. Indeed, placing this interchange near the end of the third act allows the play to resolve the couple's dilemma by other means. We can hypothesize that the marriage that concludes this play signifies the sublimation of the above violent image, in which Chimène unites and diffuses her blood in that of her lover. Merlin-Kajman isolates this bloody sword as erotic, its presence onstage as "Horreur, peut-être, mais combien délectable" (209). The violent affect conjured by the sword

onstage in this instance becomes foreclosed and merged with sexuality, scandalous but less obscene than violence.

In Corneille's later play *Cinna*, the mere possibility of stabbing and bloodshed precipitates the conclusion that resolves violent potential. The play abounds with references to the emperor's blood and the need to ritually shed it. Conspirators plan to assassinate Octave-Auguste in place of an animal sacrifice:

Demain au Capitole il fait un sacrifice;
Qu'il en soit la victime, et faisons en ces lieux
Justice à tout le monde, à la face des Dieux :
Là presque pour sa suite il n'a que notre troupe;
C'est de ma main qu'il prend et l'encens et la coupe;
Et je veux pour signal que cette même main
Lui donne, au lieu d'encens, d'un poignard dans le sein. (1.2.230-236)

When the plot thickens, the conspiring lovers threaten one another with suicide in terms that echo the previous decades' long laments and tirades. Cinna declares he will reluctantly follow through on the assassination plans, and then purge himself of his criminal act by stabbing himself, making himself a sacrificial offering for *les mânes*, or the departed soul, of the emperor:

Mais ma main, aussitôt contre mon sein tournée,
Aux mânes d'un tel prince immolant votre amant,
À mon crime forcé joindra mon châtiment,
Et par cette action dans l'autre confondue,
Recouvrera ma gloire aussitôt que perdue.

Adieu. (3.4.162-167)

These are all idle threats that further bring into relief a happy and bloodless conclusion as the former conspirators renounce violence and accept a symbolic replacement for blood in the form of power and rank. This symbolic concession constitutes a neat and decorous sublimation of the violence conjured in previous scenes. Chapter 2 will explore the coercive force that images of bloody and purple cloth took on in theater of this period, unpacking a long theatrical and extra-theatrical tradition of the aesthetics of glorified violence. Attached to the bodies of victims, cloth is a fungible, shifting, and unstable symbol.

In these plays from 1630 onwards, an afterlife of sacrificial violence persists, albeit under profoundly different circumstances. These proposed sacrifices are theorized early and often but never enacted. They are sacrifices that, according to the previous decade's doxa, would have been efficacious and sacred. Like many core elements of pre-classical drama, the ritual practice of sacrifice lost its shocking affective potential on the audience. Sacrifice was efficacious not because it resolved the dilemmas dramatized onstage. Rather, sacrifice was a reliable way to give audiences a vicarious sense of agency in uncertain times all while engaging in self-policing that made tyrannicide an inconceivable horror. Neoclassical drama retained the fiction of self-determination sacrificial stabbing appeared to give but channeled and delimited its power. This is perhaps why there was no need for profane sacrifice on the neoclassical stage. It would have been unnecessary where sacrificial violence lost its ability to wreak untold damage on present and future communities through its endlessly repetitive violence.

In Chapter 2, we will turn from bloody daggers to bloody cloth. On one level,

this transition would appear to signify a turning away from explicit violence. On another, more salient level, bloody cloth represents the unshareable experience of pain and collective trauma in ways that stabbing cannot. Cloth is a kind of habitus connected to bodies. It thus bears and retains an indelible sign of a whole series of violent acts. As a fungible symbol of pain, bloody cloth can also conceal the gory reality of suffering with only indirect reference to the instrumentalization of pain. Part of my project in Chapter 2 will involve bringing seductive narratives of torture and martyrdom to the surface.

Chapter II: *Bloody Traces: Veiling and Unveiling the Suffering Body 1621-1639*

Introduction

In my first chapter, I investigated the symbolism of bloody daggers in ritualized violence. This object, as a weapon, could absorb agency and affect, the better to decouple the ideology of pain from its radical experience. Doing so dazzled spectators with a factitious image of empowerment that belied its terrorizing redirection away from images of tyrannicide. This chapter will take up another material object that plays a key role in the transmission of violence on the stage : bloody cloth. Bloody cloth absorbs these terrorizing images by simultaneously revealing an imprint of vivid ongoing suffering and transmuting it into a symbol of glory. An encapsulation of scenes pain closely associated with and attached to bodies, it is a fungible symbol that can also detach from bodies and an authentic engagement with suffering and its implications.

Bloody cloth is both a symbol and a gorily physical object, one that has a dramatic impact for precisely this reason, the better to conjure the illusion of real presence of pain and the endurance of the moment of pain and implicitly, its prolongation. Countless times, from the seminal accounts of Caesar's funeral that shaped French dramatic theory, to numerous plays under consideration here, bloody cloth surpassed the dead bodies it covered as an evidentiary sign. At times with explicit gory detail and at others with tantalizing allusion, these objects seem contrived to move spectators: whether toward witness and judgment, or toward forgetting. In Hardy's *Scédase* (circa 1615) and *Pyrame et Thisbé* (circa 1621), gory violence is explicit and omnipresent, confounding a spectator's engagement. In contrast, *Hercule mourant* (1634), *La mort de César* (1635), and *Cinna* (1639) dissimulate or deny the presence of

violence in dramatic ceremonial. In these latter plays, admiration and friendship cover over a terrorizing, impossible scene of loss and social fragmentation. Bloody cloth absorbed and mystified the foreclosed confrontation with authority. It is the site of retributive violence's disappearance and reemergence as veneration and even love. Bodily suffering continued to exert a powerful rhetorical force throughout the period 1580-1640. Blood and bloody cloth amplified, distilled, and in many ways dissimulated violence done to the body.

Blood inhabited and indicated the intersection between violence and violated body. [18] It is this notion that allowed bloody cloth to operate as a figure for the violence it must conceal. Scholars have traditionally argued that gory violence was increasingly removed from the stage during the 1630s (Forestier 7). Part of this process occurred because blood on cloth was a less gory version and also had the distinct advantage of inhabiting the intersection between violence and violated body because of its proximity to the latter. Violence first became absorbed as blood on cloth, distancing gory scenes from the spectator while amplifying their impact.

The figure of the bloody cloth suggests how theater operates and how precisely its limits are manifested and tested. The experience of violence, in the form of pain, panic, and terror, is not only unrepresentable but a limit experience.[19] Theater makes the absent scene of violence present, distilling and amplifying it. At the same time, theater can dissimulate or draw attention away from violence and its broader consequences.

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[18] Historically speaking, no one thought of blood as circulating through the body until the late 1630s (Tucker). Other related notions such as blood pressure and movement would have been equally alien.

[19] See my introduction (13-17).

The long tradition of Roman oratory that influenced seventeenth-century drama took the seductive power of visual representation for granted.[20] Within this tradition of advancing the power of rhetoric as a visual power, however, the materiality of the cloth occupies a special place. For the master of rhetoric Quintilian, it is precisely a bloody cloth that functions as a prime catalyst for action. Quintilian notes that at Caesar's funeral, it was the toga moved his funeral-goers to action, *as if* he were dying in front of them. Not even the sight of his body could move them as effectively as the garment:

> the sight of the bloodstains on the purple-bordered toga of Gaius Caesar, which was carried at the head of his funeral procession, aroused the Roman people to fury. They knew he had been killed; they had even seen his body stretched upon the bier: but his garment, still wet with his blood, brought such a vivid image of the crime before their minds that Caesar seemed not to have been murdered, but to be being murdered before their very eyes. (Loeb 403)

It was not enough to see the dead body of Caesar. It was the cloth, with all of the bloodstains from all of the stabbings that effectively encapsulated the moment of death and the extremity of its violation. The strong disadvantage of dead bodies in burial rituals is that all the damage has been done in the past tense and the object is to mourn. His bloody toga was forensic evidence linked to crime scene. Bloody cloth absorbs a whole scene of violence as in a long-exposure camera. Counterparts of effective oratory, visual images such as bloody cloth act on spectators because of their contiguity to bodies in pain. They are objects that can absorb, amplify, and extend the image of suffering. We can say that theater operates in a similar way, producing the illusion of presence and

[20] See Berregard, Lyons, *Kingdom of Disorder*,Henin "Faut-il ensanglanter la scène".

amplifying the rhetorical impact of protracted scenes of suffering. As in oratory, moving images in theater can dissimulate as well as amplify violence and bodily suffering.

Tragedy in particular often absorbs or distills gory bodily suffering. Aristotle's definition of tragedy suggests this distillation when he argues that the scene of suffering is eminently tragic:

> Two parts, then, of the Plot-Reversal of the Situation and Recognition-turn upon surprises. A third part is the Scene of Suffering. The Scene of Suffering is a destructive or painful action, such as death on the stage, bodily agony, wounds, and the like. (Butcher 21)

However, spectacular gory suffering is out of the question:

> Fear and pity may be aroused by spectacular means; but they may also result from the inner structure of the piece, which is the better way, and indicates a superior poet. For the plot ought to be so constructed that, even without the aid of the eye, he who hears the tale told will thrill with horror and melt to pity at what takes Place. This is the impression we should receive from hearing the story of the Oedipus. But to produce this effect by the mere spectacle is a less artistic method, and dependent on extraneous aids. Those who employ spectacular means to create a sense not of the terrible but only of the monstrous, are strangers to the purpose of Tragedy; for we must not demand of Tragedy any and every kind of pleasure, but only that which is proper to it. (Butcher 33)

As my introduction explains in depth, tragedy therefore requires a degree of distillation and absorbing of potential violence. This process of managing the scene of violence is meant to hone, contain, and amplify tragic pleasure for the audience. This pleasure can

mask terror. For Kubiak, catharsis is:

> The manifestation of a fundamental and violent expulsion or disappearance of the subject and his pain into another locus- either the repressive Other or the Real. The intensity of this disappearance produces a loss of identity: the collapse of the subject/object into a third term, an Un-namable. (19)

In this analysis, the terror of non-being is foreclosed into suffering that the audience interprets as exterior, just, divine or dictated by fate (17). In so doing, theater presents objects that absorb terrorizing images while bearing the trace of denied presence of terror.

To understand how these objects function, we first have to understand how blood operates as part of Girardian symbolic substitution. Blood is traditionally believed to act as a contaminant that spreads violence (55-56). Misrecognizing violence as an external threatening force preserves the functioning of societies for which directly singling out and punishing guilty parties would be too dangerous. Sacrificial violence becomes a way to channel violence, thereby ritually washing away impure blood with pure sacrifice (59-60) and as a way to avoid socially disruptive vendettas. Through a series of substitutions, members of a society convince themselves that a disposable individual could stand in for this violence. The mimetic relation between this "impure" blood and the blood spilled in ritual sacrifice allowed the community to consider this violence purged (11, 21). A sacrificial crisis breaks out in these communities when society cannot successfully channel violence from the community (101). For Girard, theater took on the ritual channeling and purging function that ritual sacrifice had (234). Its goal is to contain and manage violence, even if it dramatizes a temporary period of instability.

Many plays performed between 1580 and 1640 stage featured what might be

termed a Girardian sacrificial crisis. However, the omnipresence of blood in these plays prevents the channeling of violence and instead suggests it continued beyond the final act of the plays. In the case of early, more graphically violent plays, the majority of the rising action persists in their troubling dénouement. In later, less graphically violent plays, the mimesis sacrificial blood normally performed is itself substituted in a series of symbolic substitutions. Bloody cloth was an integral part of these substitutions, but its role is most evident when one considers the multiple meanings and semiotics of blood during this period.

Blood, and by extension bloody cloth, had the most powerful theatrical effect when its connection to living bodies was obvious. In early modern French theater, blood both marked out violence done to individual bodies and pointed out its lasting repercussions on other bodies. It highlighted thresholds as it crossed them: the porous separation between theatrical and real space, the line between life and death, the easily-disrupted link between generations or the line between honor and shame. Ultimately, spilled blood signified both rupture and its re-inscription. It implied lineage but also hereditary discontinuity and precarity. As a persistent stain of collective guilt and trauma, blood stood for violence's potential to return with a vengeance. *La mort de César* does a bizarre about-face focusing on commemoration as a canny try to avoid future retributive violence. We can see this also in Hercule's "pardoning" in *Hercule mourant* and in the strange way in which Pyrame's death immediately provokes that of Thisbé. In *Pyrame et Thisbé* (1621) Thisbe's bloody veil catalyzes other graphic scenes of violence. The eponymous character of Jean de Rotrou's *Hercule mourant* (1634) lingers on stage in protracted agony as a poisonous blood-imbued tunic burns his flesh. Bloody cloth

masked Hercule's gory dying body, facilitating a glorious apotheosis. It denies the reality of death rather than just obscuring it. Later, the moment of assassination in George Scudéry's decorous *La mort de César* (1637) is hidden by the sudden drop of the curtain, which creates a sort of *effeuillage* of the scene of murder. By the latter half of the 1630's, this image was being sublimated and redeployed. In Pierre Corneille's *Cinna*, references to purple-striped cloth both conjure the dangerously provocative image of bloody cloth and repress any connection between it and violent impulses. In *Cinna*, Octave-Auguste forgives his conspirators, ending the cycle of retributive violence that broke out after César's assassination. He does this by elevating his conspirators and convincing them to accept the purple of their new rank as a substitute for that of his blood. They are enjoined to love, and in doing so they forget the other suffering bodies on which the state is founded.

In the plays I cite above, blood is contiguous with dying bodies. We can generalize and say that seventeenth-century drama presented blood as a trace of an invisible soul exiting the body, a trace that left a persistent stain. In provoking acts of vengeance, blood acted as a contagion that accelerated sacrificial crisis. The effusion of blood was also a crystalisation of the body's subjective value within a biopolitical network. Bound up with the question of kinship and family honor, blood was a material object and the "expression" of individual valor as it flowed from the body. As a sign of nobility as well as life force, it was visible only momentarily while being shed, and thus indicated the limit of sight. It was thus both a terrible and an admirable spectacle.

Blood played an important role even as it was increasingly absorbed into the more modest image of bloody cloth. Bloody cloth figured the limits of theatrical representation,

hinting at the moment of death and its terrible suffering. Bloody cloth covered and yet was contiguous with the suffering body.[21] It bears a trace or imprint of the highly fetishized passage from life to death and as such is a moving image in two senses. It can be thought of as a sort of time-lapse camera that had a whole scene exposed on it. It also moved in the sense of having a great rhetorical impact, perhaps greater than dead, if not dying, bodies alone.

Over the course of this period, bloody cloth instrumentalized and sublimated terror. Instead of a horrible accident contingent on misfortune, bloody cloth rendered violence natural, right, and fitting. Over this period, it caught the splashes of blood, amplifying their catalyzing effects. Increasingly, it replaced horror and outrage with a more moving and elusive spectacle of violence. It increasingly symbolized glory at the expense of explicit goriness and admiration for the illustrious dead. Blood was often conflated with purple, a color-fast dye often associated with the illustrious, glorified martyr (Roberts 458-59). This beautiful moving image masked panic while reinscribing it. It did so because it never could show what it was covering. Its function increased as the suffering body successively disappeared from the stage.

The play *Cinna* contains a critical snapshot that encapsulates the continual metamorphosis these images underwent during this period. As a kind of bookend to this period*, Cinna* is replete with traumatic memories of the many victims of state and internecine violence. These memories create the dynamic in this play for a kind of sublimation of violence reminiscent of earlier plays; here, the figurative "pourpre" of the royal blood and clothing is at the heart of the tragedy's representation of suffering.

[21] For a treatment of the implications of clothing's absorptive potential as it relates to fashioning renaissance identity, see Jones and Stallybrass

Repeatedly referred to as a “sanglante image,” the memory of her father's murder encourages Emilie to exact her revenge. When Octave-Auguste elevates Cinna and betroths him to Emilie, her now purple bedecked fiancé stands in for, surpasses even, her murdered father. This exchange produces surplus value for both Auguste and Emilie. As a result, the play simultaneously conjures and sublimates images of the suffering royal, paternal body. The canny sublimation and redeployment of this image underwrites the play's resolution, which effectuates a turning away from blood and toward representation. The traces of the suffering and murdered body that haunted the play and accrue at an almost feverish pace suddenly vanish when Auguste eliminates the possibility of retributive violence that this image has evoked. He proffers another in its place, that of the royal body, which both evokes and represses the connection between itself and the bloody suffering body.

Auguste is acting from a position of strength. If the conspirators do not accept his offer of friendship, Cinna will be covered with his own blood. Moreover, according to Auguste’s version of events, even in death Auguste would retain an exalted status Cinna can attempt to borrow only through assassination. In referring to his own blood as purple, Auguste obfuscates the grim possibility of his own murder, by transforming it into purple dye. In this way, and in contrast to earlier theater that glorified gory revenge, such later drama as *Cinna* hid and held in reserve the potential for gore behind an image of glory. Scholarship on French tragedy of this period has brought to light the implications of various strains of violent aesthetics.

Theorizing Blood

As I discussed at length in my introduction, scholars frequently relate the question

of violence in early seventeenth-century theater to an unstable political climate and shifting notions of kingship. These readings might foster the temptation to see blood as metaphorical: a symbol of legacy. In this chapter, however, we see that bloodlines as legacy cede to lines of blood – and other material manifestations of the body's vital fluid on stage. It is the materiality of blood, as well as the many ways in which it symbolizes violence, which is under consideration in this chapter.

In an earlier generation of tragedy, blood was adjunctive to scenes of graphic violence. It catalyzed action onstage and intensified the affective impact on the audience.[22] For many scholars of this generation of tragedy, tragedy's visible blood facilitated moments of confusion between real and real-seeming violence and connected the stage to other violent public rituals:

> afin que le spectateur soit saisi par cette proximité du sang versé et du sang représenté, pris dans cette analogie transparente et ne sache finalement plus très bien s'il assiste à la mise en scène d'une œuvre d'art ou à une véritable action sanglante (Biet *Théâtres* xxxii)

Biet argues that this generation of tragedy encouraged spectators to question the legitimacy of law, morals, and power. It was bloody spectacle and its excess that invited spectators to question and judge:

> It est aussi primordial que le spectateur hésite et s'arrête un moment lorsqu'il doit se prononcer sur un cas hyperbolique et complexe, à la faveur d'une crise spécifique et violente que l'auteur prend comme sujet et comme fable, et dont il suivra le cours. C'est finalement parce qu'il y a excès extraordinaire et figuration

[22] See see Aigaliers and Billard.

> hyperbolique du monde qu'il y a matière à intérêt et nécessite de jugement, c'est parce que ces excès peuvent paraitre invraisemblables qu'ils sont amenés à offrir un exemple pour penser le pouvoir, la loi, et les mœurs, puisqu'ils saisissent, qu'ils émeuvent et qu'ils choquent. (Biet xl)

Theater was a detour taken by those who wanted to discuss the still-recent violence of the French Wars of Religion, despite the Édit de Nantes' interdiction (xxxviii). This trauma became a cultural touchstone, frequently evoked indirectly as way to scrutinize the relation between legitimate power and violence (xxxix). In Biet's scholarship, violence may captivate the spectators' attention, but it ultimately also empowers them to witness and judge for themselves.

Other scholars understand the presence of blood as a trace of unacknowledged collective trauma. For Angebault, blood conjured memories of bloody civil war, and thus was a motif compulsively repeated in theater from 1620 onwards. He links *Pyrame et Thisbé* to Théophile's other writings and reads the trace of collective guilt and trauma imparted by the cyclical violence of the religious wars. In one poem in particular, Théophile describes a contemporaneous battle in France in which "et le sang fit rougir la Loire/ de la honte de vos combats." The poem evokes the masses of anonymous collective blood spilled during the Saint Barthélemy massacre and the shame both the king's soldiers and the rebels felt (94). Angebault theorizes that the repetition of blood had to do with the way in which the collective imagination "washed" guilt in more blood. He focuses on the term "rougir" in *Pyrame et Thisbé* (1621) and how reddening murderous blood indexes or symbolizes blush of shame. Thisbé anthropomorphizes the dagger Pyrame used in his suicide as a shameful traitor in her line "il en rougit, le traitre."

Angebault posits that the popularity of this motif for the subsequent thirty years was due to the way the audience identified the shame attributed to the dagger to their own sense of collective guilt (92). The blushing dagger became an obsessional image compulsively repeated and then distanced over time into increasingly allusive terms and motifs. It remained inside and outside *Pyrame et Thisbé* a dangerously attractive and recurring image.

In Angebault's analysis, theater is a means by which society works through its feelings of collective trauma and guilt. The reddened dagger could stand as a cipher for masses of bloodshed even after violence became increasingly rare onstage. In a similar way, bloody cloth was a site of traumatic collective memory. In *Pyrame et Thisbé*, for example, Thisbé's veil is at least as powerful as an instrument of terror and fascination as the bloody dagger. Pyrame misinterprets its rents and bloodstains as the trace of Thisbé's devoured body. He mistakenly considers it a beloved relic, rather than a shameful or traitorous weapon. The veil becomes a screen onto which he projects a hallucinatory image of suffering. Pyrame cannot bear the thought of being separated from Thisbé, and so imagines he sees it occurring in front of him. More importantly, venerating this object aggravates Pyrame's aggression and sense of powerlessness, causing him redirect desire for revenge on himself. There are many other potential objects of his aggression, including the lion that supposedly ate Thisbé, Pyrame's authoritative father, or the tyrannical king that almost succeeded in having Pyrame murdered. Instead Pyrame blames himself. In these plays bloody cloth conjures the specter of death and in turn becomes imbued with affect and instrumentality.

Other plays of this period could be said to terrorize the spectator by highlighting

the powerlessness of legal authority and by presenting suicide and murder as desirable, natural, and efficacious. Plays such as *Scédase* may terrorize as they fascinate and encourage introspection. At the very least, however, these plays allow the audience to see aspects of the relationship between power and violence. Scédase knows precisely who is to blame when he kills himself, and he feels free to accuse them of tyranny and deceit. Though graphically violent, the play also gestures beyond the visual, problematizing ocular proof. Later plays with less graphic violence focus attention on bloody cloth, at times mystifying violence, its causes, its relationship to power, and other suffering bodies.

Much scholarship on later, less violent plays focuses on the limits placed on bloody violence onstage, and how these limits honed and focused the passions tragedy evoked in the spectator. Other scholarship considers blood as a signifier for kinship as well as kingship. In several important recent articles, scholars have focused on the limits of violence onstage as it became circumscribed in the 1630s. This is the period of the supposed "rediscovery" of Aristotle, Horace, and the importance of managing the scene of stage violence. Hénin analyzes contemporary translators of Aristotle and Horace and argues that death was thought to have the greatest rhetorical effect when rendered "manifest" but not represented ("*Faut-il ensanglanter la scène ?"* 15-16). She is largely invested in understanding the relationship between the limits of violence and those of representation at this time. Explicit violence was not improper per se, but simply ineffectual or its effect wearing out too quickly with its novelty. She argues that seventeenth-century theorists were concerned that the spectator could not be habituated to the depiction of suffering. Though the scene of suffering was the most likely way to

evoke feelings of pathos or pity, the spectator could not become habituated or it would lose its effect or one could become cruel as a result (30-31). Thus we can see something like an economy of tantalizing attenuated violence, where violence gains more power or value through being carefully managed.

This economy of violence also characterizes the needs of the audience during this time, which held a paradoxical reaction to violence: the desire for spectacle and the refusal of horrible depictions of death (Hénin, *Faut-il ensanglanter la scène?* 206). From the beginning of the 1630s, the Parisian public imagined itself to be increasingly refined meaning that, as Jacques Scherer notes, by 1635 murders were not commonly depicted onstage (418). As I discussed in the introduction, in this era, playwrights tried to render theater as spectacular as possible. For example, Rotrou's *Hercule mourant* is an example of a play that renders death spectacular but not shocking (Berregard 196). Berregard focuses on the extent to which Hercule's suffering was portrayed but not his death, his transfiguration at the end making the audience forget what was terrifying about his protracted death (197). Her work challenges the assumption that violence loses its impact when it becomes less explicit. It suggests that theatrical violence's detours and amplifications themselves dazzle and subtly terrorize. That the audience forgot the reality of Hercule's death is also significant, suggesting that this terror was too potent to contemplate. Terror was present in this forgetting in the form of redirection.

Spectacular, yet attenuated violence could be more shocking than violence itself. The eponymous character of Corneille's *Médée* overwhelms Jason with the sight of his loved ones suffering and dying, the sight of which is more powerful than his suffering alone (Margitić 20). The fatal blood-imbued cloth is an integral part of Médée's spectacle

of horror that provokes Jason's suicide:

Ce présent déceptif a bu toute leur force,

Et *bien mieux que mon bras* vengera mon divorce. (4.1 italics mine)

Médée shows herself to be entirely capable of killing with more direct means, but bloody cloth amplifies its spectacle. It is blood that attaches to and kills Créon and Créuse.

Vois mille autres venins, cette liqueur épaisse

Mêle du sang de l'hydre avec celui de Nesse (4.1.984–85).

Above all the other magic ingredients, blood is what makes the clothing stick, the better to create a scene of lingering agony.

Blood and bodily suffering continued to be instrumental in later drama, even when theater became less visually spectacular. Even as it disappeared from the visual lexicon of theater into the descriptive power of speech, blood's symbolism also changed status, moving from symbolizing death, murder, and guilt to a notion of lineage and family. For Merlin-Kajman, blood transformed from a trace of violence that conjured many contradictory and inflammatory emotions to one consistent with absolutism's insistence on the sacrality of kingship in the blood of the king. Theater presented intriguing moments in which blood is first conjured as a sign of violence and then sublimated into an image of glory or forcefully denied. In doing so, these plays naturalized the public persona, that of the king as well as other individuals, fusing it with private passions. In the introduction, I focused on elided vulnerability and tyranny in *Hercule mourant.* Here I discuss the figure as a kind of martyr. The eponymous character transforms from a tyrant to a glorified and forgiving martyr by means of the transformed status of blood. Shed in an act of vengeance, this blood sticks to him and fuses his robe,

or public persona, to his body, or private passions. As a result of this fusion, Hercule can forgive his enemies and their own failure to sacrifice their private passions to their public roles (120). For Merlin-Kajman, blood is the key to this theatrical transformation. Blood, whether visible onstage or implied in language, moved audiences to purge themselves of the desire for vengeance. They did so because they witnessed not only the fatal consequences of violent retribution but the concomitant transcendence of death and the desire of vengeance.

Merlin-Kajman's analysis implies moments in which violence dazzles. To use Kubiak's terms, dazzling displays of violence conjure and simultaneously erase a horrifying spectacle. The true terrorizing image being too terrifying to contemplate, it erases itself and returns in a hallucinatory form. Such an extension of her argument is possible only by widening the literary-historical scope to include pre-classical violent tragedies and by scrutinizing the various meanings of blood and bloody cloth in early modern culture. Theater acted as the staging ground for the transformation of the symbolism of blood from gore to glory. In earlier drama, bloody cloth moved people to spectacular acts of violence, acting as a screen onto which characters projected untenable phobias. Instead of eliminating violence, bloody cloth re-directed violent impulses. Bloody cloth became more tantalizingly spectacular just as real bodies in pain become less prominent and theater's relation to violence is less evident. We can see this occurring if we understand all the contemporary meanings of blood and bloody cloth.

Early modern French tragedy presented numerous examples in which a character or object acted as a screen, bearing a trace of violence's hallucinatory return. In early, more graphically violent theater, such as *Scédase* and *Pyrame et Thisbé*, the plays

dramatized the consequences of an absence of viable legal authority and traumatic reminders of potential social disintegration. Moments in which bloody violence was mystified as "divine" served as a way to absorb and ultimately re-inscribe the resulting terror of non-being. In later, less explicitly violent drama, the confrontation with inadequate or tyrannical authority was increasingly circumscribed. These plays did so by working with the often-complex semiotics of blood in early modern culture.

In theater, nobility is both literally and figuratively expressed in blood and its shedding. Blood in the early seventeenth-century was thought of being a key element in bodily functions and was considered to be nourishment for the soul if not its locus (Safty 117-18). Therefore, the valor or essence of a person becomes visible in their blood as it flows out of the body, illustrating the escaping soul (119). This physiological understanding of honor adds to Angebault's assertion that bloody violence was necessary to purge guilt. Honor had to be shown through blood leaving the body. It could also be enacted as a performance. Moments of violence that spill noble blood were an expression of valor in a concrete as well as a metaphoric sense. Characters bleeding onstage showed their *valeur* as their soul escapes their body. Through violence, honor makes itself manifest in the form of "generous" or courageous action. Characters who enact or demand retribution are indirectly "expressing" their valor because their gestures resemble or pay tribute to their family affiliation. Blood is both a material object and a performance, something that must be made manifest and present onstage.

We can see corollaries in several contemporary plays. For instance, in Rotrou's *Antigone* first performed in 1637 and published in 1639, Ismène laments that Antigone's blood has splattered onto her and points out her lack of courage. Antigone's brave

defiance of the law and her later suicide renders her more "beautiful," but this same blood defiles, marks or points out her sister:

> Le sang qu'elle a versé, l'embellit, et me tache
>
> Il la peint généreuse et me témoigne lâche (5.8.1716-1717)

Ismène cannot respond to the scene of violence before her. They both are of the same family, but Ismène lacks the courage to bear witness to her sister's blood with her own. Instead she passively laments and admires her sister. The 1637 pamphlet *Le Jugement du Cid*, likely by Charles Sorel, analyses Chimène speech after her father's death, noting that virtuosic circulation from valor to wound to speaker traces a dizzingly sophisticated circuit. Individuals within the same family and their body parts are fungible.[23] For Sorel, the horror Chimène feels at seeing her murdered father's flowing blood further underwrites the lack of subject/object distinction Chimène feels at this moment. He is commenting on Corneille's following lines:

> Ou plutôt sa valeur en cet état réduite,
>
> Me parlait par sa plaie, et hâtait ma poursuite ;
>
> Et pour se faire entendre au plus juste des Rois,
>
> Par ceste triste bouche elle empruntait ma voix. (2.8. 677-680)

Remarking that "Voilà un sang qui sait faire merveilles," Sorel claims that this style is needlessly circuitous and an artificial rendering of a traumatized daughter :

> Voyez que de détours, cet homme mort ne pouvant plus parler emprunte la voix de sa valeur, sa valeur emprunte la bouche de sa plaie, et la plaie emprunte la voix de Chimène. Il faut avoir bien de l'esprit pour faire ces fictions, et avoir ces belles

[23] For more on Sorel and *La Querelle du Cid*, see Civardi.

pensées mêmes en une telle occasion où Chimène devait avoir l'esprit bien étourdi. (239)

Sorel discounts the emotive force of blood, which catalyses actions in these plays and also serves as an elegant motif for characters, from Chimène in *Le Cid* to Marc-Antoine in *La mort de César*, acting on behalf of others. Blood here moves. It circulates between members of the same family and flows out of the body like words from a mouth. It also figures the violation of the paternal body by "writing" or directing her behavior:

Son flanc était ouvert, et pour mieux m'émouvoir,
Son sang sur la poussière écrivait mon devoir (2.8.675-676)

Chimène's duty is less gory than Ismène's. She is to request that the king order her father's murderer to be executed. In both cases, it is the sight of blood that incites individuals to live up to their genealogically-derived social status.

The above references to violence are fairly restrained in their degree of explictness. Ismene uses "verse" to refer to Antigone's stabbing and "peint" to evoke its flow. Chimène's reference to writing is another way to indicate how blood exited her father's body. These descriptions are of blood that requires action. When blood does not require revenge, as it did with increasing frequency over this period, it evoked violence in an even less graphic way. Frequently, in *Cinna* as in other plays, these descriptions use the term "pourpre" or make reference to bloody cloth instead of blood or bodies.

The term "pourpre" was used consistently throughout the period as a decorous way to refer to blood that resulted from violent confrontation. The *Aeneid* contains a used of the term: "Purpuream vomit illa animam" ("He vomits up the purple stream of life") (289). It was construed as an evocation of sudden death, linked to the method of

extracting the dye from sea snails through crushing (Valeriano 358). It indirectly conjured this scene of violence but replaced the gory, shameful stain of blood with the beautiful, glorious dye of royalty and martyrdom. For instance, in *Saül le furieux* (1572) by Jean de la Taille. the line "On voit le prochain fleuve en pourpre devenir" (verso 26) is used to describe the death of Saul's own army along with his three sons. Other references to spilling blood in the same play describe it as a stain, for instance "Plutôt que de souiller dedans son sang vos mains?" in reference to gory murder (13 verso). "Purple" as a signifier for blood evoked wrongful death and even martyrdom, eclipsing the graphic presentation of death and suffering with an admirable and triumphant image.

Bloody cloth was another decorous reminder of grisly death. It generally symbolized the wrongfully murdered throughout this period. Discussed often in the context of Caesar's bloody toga, the term was also used when discussing more prosaic executions or assassinations. In the context of contemporary England, Jones and Stallybrass demonstrate that clothing was often thought to retain the shape of its owners, stirring up memories of them even after death (298). Their examples of bloody cloth focus on the garments themselves, rather than the blood with which they are imbued. What if we consider blood as a kind of dye, part of the "heterogeneous materialities that form a subject" (Jones and Stallybrass 46)? Like dye, blood can confer status on the otherwise blank canvas of ordinary objects. It is helpful to consider blood as a kind of dye because the term "purple" was a more decorous way to refer to the blood of martyrs. Cloth "purple" with blood appeared consistently in religious accounts of violent death. In a 1660 poem on glorified martyrs, they are described as those "qui pour avoir gagné la palme du Martyre Portent des Étendards empourpré de leur sang" (Le Febvre 7). Purple

cloth, or cloth stained with purple blood signified a further sublimation of an image of violence. It played off of the more gory and graphic connotations of blood with the decorous, illustrious image of martyrdom.

Even when pieces of clothing do not belong to bodies, staining them with blood transforms them into tokens of the dead. Spilled blood is an object constitutive of subjects and can serve as a material reminder of them. People often made relics of the blood of the executed. While the garments belonging to the dead would have been in limited supply, anyone with a handkerchief could dip it in the copious blood shed in execution. More information exists of this practice in contemporary England especially in the context of executed English Catholics.[24] The practice occurred in France as well, generally surrounding accounts of people believed to have been wrongfully executed (Morgues 156). Many contemporary sources retell the tale of Clothilde, a Christian Frankish princess murdered by her pagan husband. A handkerchief covered in her blood becomes evidence to bring to her royal brothers of her husband's cruelty (Tarault 189). It was a portable sign of bodily suffering and a token that could move the emotions in the absence of the dead body. In theater, it was a less horrifying way to signify violence,as was the case in Jean-Ogier de Gombauld's 1658 *Les Danaïdes* : "N'ai-je pas vu d'abord un mouchoir tout sanglant,/ Et *si je l'ose dire* une sanglante épée ?" (Gombauld 58, italics mine).

Swords plunge *into* bodies whereas cloth, at most, adheres to their surfaces. Cloth dissimulates violence in the same way that it hides nudity. It is a potentially unreliable sign. Bloody cloth in theater was often a site of confusion or mystification (Jones and

[24] See Hadfield, Wilson.

Stallybrass 47, 256). It was also the site where the sight of gory violence was managed and attenuated. Over the course of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, bloody cloth, and later purple cloth, came to stand in for violence done to the body.

Tragic Blood and Bloody Cloth

A dramatic shift took place during this period, during which blood became more frequently shed and described in greater detail on stage. Arguably, this shift represents a shift in the mimetic power of blood: if bloody cloth first amplified the spectacle of blood, it eventually replaced this spectacle entirely. Theater in the later sixteenth century made significant use of the symbolism of blood but not of the comparatively small amount visible onstage. In Robert Garnier's 1580 version of *Antigone,* Jocaste kills herself onstage and uses graphic language to describe the course the knife will take from heart to kidneys (3.1320-1322). In response to this scene, Antigone deplores at length without discussing or describing the streams of blood that exited her mother's body, referring only to the redness of the dagger still wet with blood (1335, 1374). When blood is shed offstage, however, characters describe it in rich, evocative language. Jocaste tries to redirect her sons' mutual hatred toward her by describing how she conceived them with her own son while he was stained and defiled by parricidal blood:

> visez
>
> à moi, qui ai produit ces frères divisés
>
> Qui les ai engendrez de mon enfant leur frère,
>
> *Encore tout dégouttant du meurtre de son père* (2.664-667 italics mine).

The messenger describing the unseen battle between Polynice and Eteocle waxes

eloquent about Eteocle's bleeding to death like a sacrifice:

Le sang en fort fumeux, comme sur un autel

Le sang d'un agneau fume après le coup mortel,

Que le prêtre sacré dans la gorge lui donne.

Etéocle pâlit, devient faible, et s'étonne

De voir son sang couler d'une telle roideur: (3.1154-1158)

In this generation of tragedy, onstage violence was comparatively rare, and its impact was largely related through evocative description of action in the *hors scène*. In later tragedies, such as *Didon se sacrifiant*, blood serves as a catalyzer of violence. *Didon se sacrifiant* features several references to blood being shed before the profuse streams Didon unleashes onstage in Act Five. She refers to her pain as an ever-bleeding wound, foreshadowing her death by redeploying a reference to her suffering in Hades described in the *Aeneid* (537). She then recalls an animal sacrifice she participated in the day before. In this ritual, blood splashed from the animal and marked her forehead, and the wine offering turned to blood. This recollection heightens the tension, as Didon relives the moment she was literally marked as contaminated.

Hier que j'achevais l'annuel sacrifice

À mon loyal époux, le sang d'une génisse,

Jaillissant imprévu, le front me macula ;

Le Prêtre par trois fois d'horreur se recula,

Voyant le vin sacré (chose fâcheuse à croire!),

De pur sang devenu, prendre une couleur noire (4.3.1303-1308)

The use of the verb "maculer" to indicate she is marked out is a visceral evocation of

contamination, demonstrating the uncontrollability of blood sacrifices. This was added to the account of the wine turning to blackened blood in the *Aeneid* (427). Blood on the stage had a powerful catalyzing impact during this period. It motivated future acts of violence even when it was conspicuously absent. In *Scédase*, Euribiade and Charilas violently rape and murder Théane and Evexipe before throwing their bodies in a well. They then compose themselves, comforted by the knowledge that by the time their crimes are discovered they will be far away:

> Le visage rassis, composé de façon
> Qu'une gaie assurance efface tout soupçon
> En cas que rencontrés au sortir d'aventure.
> Car le père, cherchant l'humide sépulture
> Où sa race repose, avant que la trouver,
> Ne donnera que trop loisir de se sauver.
> Sauvés, après, il n'a témoignage qui puisse
> Nous convaincre du fait que sur un faible indice (3.1.823-830).

In the subsequent scene, Scédase returns to find his daughters missing. His neighbors had attempted to locate the women in vain (4.1.946-947). They have only the "faible indice" of the crime, in the form of a suspicious sequence of events. Phorbante remembers that he heard screams, which abruptly ceased when the two young men left (4.1.969-974). Evandre, another neighbor, confirms this sequence, and also recalls the men left hurriedly. "Telle qu'à qui viendrait de commettre un forfait" (4.1.984). He uses the conditional tense because the men only have conjecture, rather than something definitive, to connect the young Spartans to the crime. Not only do they not have an eyewitness but

there is no trace of blood to paint a picture of the scene. A moment later, they find the young womens' bodies. They are able to read the signs of violence on their bodies and determine that they were raped and murdered (5.1.1025-1034). It is unclear how they know the women were raped. It is likely they would have inferred it from visible trauma they do not describe. It, like their cut throats, could have been vividly rendered in the stage effigies of the time. Even if this violence were apparent to the audience, it lacks the social recognition that marriage rituals would have afforded. There is no bloody bed sheet to inspect to legitimate and account for their loss of virginity.[25] Blood and, more importantly, bloody cloth were critically important in creating a believable record. The bare life these dead bodies are reduced to is almost meaningless without their social habitus.

Like Caesar's dead body at his funeral, their bodies do not have the requisite rhetorical persuasion. When they go before the tribunal, the Leuctrian mens' accounts are revealed as partial and conjectural. One member of the tribunal asserts that a variety of other people could have committed the crimes after the young men left:

> Car tes hôtes partis, une troupe brigande
> Possible aura commis cette cruauté grande;
> Tes propres serviteurs où tu as plus de foi
> Ne sont pas sans soupçon, (5.1.1197-1200)

Anyone, from a marauding band of criminals to their own servants, could have committed the rapes and murders. There is nothing that makes these crimes stick. Charilas and Euribiade could not wash their guilt away, but in avoiding or removing

[25] I am grateful to Juliette Cherbuliez for this gruesome observation.

bloodstains from their persons, they remove all connection with the crime. Lack of visible blood does not mean there was no violent catalyst. We can say that part of what motivates Scédase to curse all of Sparta generally is the fallout from the lack of incriminating blood attaching the young men to the scene of the crime. Additionally, if any blood persisted in any form, it would have been splattered on Scédase himself when water from the gory well was splashed on him (5.1.993-994). Like Didon, he is marked out as a sacrificial victim long before his suicide.

By 1621, these multiple kinds of violence became increasingly absorbed into the single figure of the bloody garment. *Pyrame et Thisbé* is a watershed moment in which blood is as important a trace of violence as is bloody cloth. He is horrified when he realizes the ground is covered with blood:

> Mais déjà la rosée à vos tapis mouillés,
> Que., dis-je, c'est du sang qui vous les a souillés?
> D'où peut venir ce sang (5.1.1084-1087)

The sight or feeling of blood immediately makes him think of violence, then about bloodthirsty wild animals, and finally about the macabre mythical qualities of the dark nocturnal scene:

> la troupe sanguinaire,
> Des Ours, & des Lions vient ici d'ordinaire
> Une frayeur me va dans l'âme repassant,
> Je songe aux cris affreux d'un Hibou menaçant,
> Qui m'a toujours suivi, ces ombrages nocturnes
> Augmentent ma terreur & ces lieux taciturnes. (5.1.1088-1093)

The other objects in the scene – owl, shadows, and silent forest – increase his fear, but blood catalyzes it. In fact, prior to seeing blood, Théophile idealizes the natural landscape.

His fear only increases when he looks at the ground more carefully. Pyrame sees blood and a series of footprints, from both Thisbé and the lion. These objects successively had made successive contact with the ground in the previous scene. Pyrame misreads their imbrication as a simultaneous action:

J'en reconnais la trace, et vois sur la poussière
Tout le sang que versait sa gueule carnassière.
Ces traces que je vois son pied les a formées,
Et celles du Lion pêle-mêle imprimées (5.1. 995-998)

These are all a series of *imprints* on the same ground, to which Pyrame mistakenly attributes simultaneity. His error is compounded when he attributes supernatural power to the dead animal's blood which he incorrectly believes is that of his mistress. Even outside the body, it still carries an animating life force that transfer into other forms. He imagines Thisbé's blood will turn into roses:

Et je crois que Vénus verra bientôt écloses,
De ce sang amoureux, mille moissons de roses,
Mon sang dessus le sien par ici coulera,
Mon âme avec la sienne ainsi se mêlera (5.1.1059-1064)

Moreover, he imagines that spilling his blood on hers will join their souls together in the flowers. Failing that, Pyrame will incorporate Thisbé's blood, and in so doing transmute into his being and his soul:

Au moins je baiserai la trace de ses pas,

Et ma lèvre en suivant cette sanglante route,

Cent fois rebaisera son beau sang goutte à goutte.

A beau sang précieux qui tout froid et tout mort

Faites dedans mon âme encore un tel effort!" (5.1.1074-1079)

Clearly, blood itself provokes Pyrame's catastrophization. By the time he discovers Thisbé's bloody veil, he has already determined she is dead and has begun to contemplate suicide. The veil as a material object provides an important supplement to the blood. It solidifies his conviction Thisbé is dead, which gives him an object of veneration to grasp. Even after imbibing blood, he searches for her body, even calling back the lion, wishing to venerate it. The veil is contiguous to Thisbé's body and constitutive of her identity or person in a different way than blood.

The veil is a part of her person in a sense and bears a kind of trace or aura. Pyrame conveys this awe when he remembers that it has touched the gold of her hair and protected her lovely face.

Le faut-il adorer, il le faut je le veux,

Il a touché jadis l'or de ses blonds cheveux,

Ce voile à nos amours prêtant son chaste usage,

Défendait au Soleil de baiser son visage,

Il fut en ma faveur soigneux de son beau teint (5.1.1195-1200)

The veil is also constitutive of Thisbé's chastity and beauty. The term *usage* here means both that it allows itself to be used and that it is a habitus, conveying custom as it costumes. It is an *alienable* sign or constitutive part, meaning Thisbé loses a part of her

chaste habits along with the veil. As such, its loss signifies a loss of her chastity. Meding connects this correspondence between cloth and subject:

> Before its fall, the veil safeguarded Thisbé's body for Pyrame alone by serving as a screen between her and the elements […]. Without the veil's protective cover, Thisbé's body is exposed, naked, no longer reserved for Pyrame's sole pleasure (92)

Pyrame and Thisbé incorrectly imagine a stark division between nature and culture, associating the authority figures who survey them as false, superficial, and theatrical in contrast to an idyllic vision of nature (Meding 82, 90). The veil is a fungible supplement to Thisbé's chastity. Rejecting artifice, Pyrame makes the grave error of misreading the cloth as a stable sign, one which would convey a reliable message about his beloved. He cannot understand that it is an artificial construction that nonetheless follows the contours of a natural body, aiding in its self-presentation and construction of a subject while being dissociable. Thisbé's bloody veil ultimately precipitates Pyrame's suicide because he believes it can be a reliable "witness" and in scrutinizing it he can discover the scene as if in a painting:

> Mais que trouvé-je? Cette sanglante toile,
> À la pauvre défunte avait servi de voile.
> Ô trop cruel témoin de mon dernier malheur,
> Témoin de mon forfait, sois-le de ma douleur (5.1.1083-1086)

Later in the same scene he claims that her death is "painted" onto the veil with her blood:

> Sois-tu dorénavant révéré comme saint,
> Et qu'en faveur du sang qui peint notre infortune

La nuit te daigne mettre avec sa robe brune! (5.1.1094-1096)

He "reads" Thisbé's death in the rips and bloodstains of the veil because of its contiguity with the body it adorned.

In this play, garments figure death because they have directly touched bodies. When Thisbé's mother describes her nightmare in which she sees the ghost of her daughter, the semi-transparent cloth adheres closely enough to the body to bear the imprint of blood escaping the wound, making it a particularly effective image:

J'ai rencontré d'abord un corps pâle et sanglant
Qui me représentait d'un objet lamentable
De ma fille Thisbé, le portrait véritable.
Le corps avait le sein de trois grands coups ouvert,
Qui teignait le linceul dont il est couvert (4.2. 866-869)

Here Thisbé is represented as a ghost. Ghosts onstage were commonly costumed this way, both draped in a burial cloth and bearing the signs of death or even decay.[26] The mother describes the wounds in her chest under the cloth and the blood which has leaked through. While the ghost is covered in burial cloth, it is not a ritually prepared corpse or an effigy. The latter two are processed within a socially-prescribed mourning ritual that is intended to place a once-living person definitively in the past tense. Instead, it is a kind of spectral image that helps to encapsulate a whole scene of suffering by bearing some of the traces of blood that stain the corpse. At the same time, the cloth itself cannot accurately depict the scene of violence it evokes. To be understood, it has to operate in conjunction with Thisbé's accusatory language and her visible bleeding. In later drama,

26 For a range of work on this subject, see Jones and Stalybrass, Lecercle, and Kapitaniak.

bloody cloth took over the scene of representation, dispensing with the need for visible bodies to supplement their *mise en scène* of violence.

Bloody cloth became be a symbol of, even a vehicle for, violence as the decade continued. Puget de la Serre's *Pyrame et Thisbé* is an early adaptation or re-writing of Théophile's famous play. Published in 1633 and dedicated to Marie de Médicis, patron of nonviolent pastoral dramas, Puget de la Serre's prose play gives little weight to the blood Pyrame finds on the ground but reads his mistress's death in the bloody veil:

> N'est-ce pas ici le voile de ma chère Thisbé, que je vois tout sanglant, & ou quelque Lion a laissé les dernières marques de sa fureur, avec les dents meurtrières? Il est trop vrai pour en douter (101).

Not only does he use the veil as a means of interpreting what transpired, but it has a powerful rhetorical effect, which he describes. It is a *gage,* and he again uses the term marque to describe the trace she left on it: "Quel dessein que tu aies eu de me laisser ce gage, je le baignerai de mon sang, puis qu'il est marqué du tien, afin que nos morts soient mélangées ensemble" (102-103).

The description of his moment of death is relatively circumspect, described as a "fleuve de sang" (104) that too stains the cloth. It cloaks what in Théophile's version is a rather shocking image:

> Aime ce cœur Thisbé, tout massacré qu'il est;
> Encore un coup Thisbé, par la dernière plaie,
> Regarde là-dedans si ma douleur est vraie (5.1. 1114-1116)

An absent Thisbé is invited to look through his bloody wounds at his massacred heart. In Puget de la Serre's version, this image is deflected into several more restrained

images. In the next scene, Thisbé identifies the veil as the cause of her lover's death, and the knife becomes the locus for its relatively hygienic description: "Il est mort, je vois la porte par où son âme est sortie, cette épée a été la clef qui l'a ouverte" (de la Serre 116).

Bloody cloth is a primary feature of an era that was fascinated and repulsed by spectacular violence. If, as Hénin asserts, in French drama of the 1630s the moment of death retained its singular visual impact on the audience while eliding gruesome details, bloody cloth is an overlooked but powerful nonverbal index of physical suffering that shocks decorously.

Rotrou's *Hercule mourant* performed as early as 1634, published in 1635, exemplifies this decade's deployment of bloody cloth as a concentrated aesthetic of suffering, especially when we compare Rotrou's version with that of Mainfray and Prévost, who follow the pseudo-Senecan *Hercules Oetaenus*. Rotrou's play renders the title character's death spectacular and yet relatively attenuated in terms of violence. The myth of Hercules prominently features a tunic or cloak that his wife Dejanira mistakenly stains with poisonous blood. The bloody tunic that kills Hercules is a major feature of this particular violent aesthetic. In previous versions of this pseudo-Senecan play, In *Hercules Oetaeus* the eponymous character actually injures himself further:

> Scarce has he named the plague when lo, he raves, he tears his own flesh apart, with his own hand wounding and rending his huge limbs. He seeks to throw aside the robe; in this alone have I seen Alcides fail. Yet striving to tear the robe, he tears his limbs as well. (Loeb 253)

Hercules tears his tunic and flesh off at the same time (Mainfray 37[27] and Prévost 3.1.1293-1299) In Rotrou's version, Hercules does not tear the tunic off once it has attached to his flesh. Also significantly, the cloth itself does not burn up. His body is never revealed. Unlike Mainfray and Prévost's gory previous versions, the cloth adheres to his flesh and his body remains covered. Hercules hints at how he can *almost* see his entrails but we never see them: "de mes nerfs les plus forts cette peste dispose,/ Et presqu'à mes regards mes entrailles expose" (4.1.937-938). Later, the poisonous cloth is consumed along with his body. However, this burning is simultaneous instead of successive and thus hides the body:

> Ce feu ne cesse point; la toile qu'il allume,
> Attachée à ce corps, avec lui se consume:
> En vain tout mon effort s'emploie à l'arracher. (5.2. 1020-1024).

It consumes itself along with the body. Importantly, he also states that he cannot remove the cloth, which would hardly be worth mentioning if it had burnt or evaporated. The audience never sees any part of his suffering body directly, but can only guess at how Hercule slowly wastes and burns, rather than gorily mutilates himself, beneath an intact garment.

This rendition of Hercule's painful demise is not as shocking as its pseudo-Senecan predecessor or earlier French adaptations. In retaining this fatal tunic, however, Rotrou's version still deploys a gory image of bloody violence. We should remember that the blood on this cloth does not come from Hercule but from Nesse, a Cyclopes he killed with a poisoned arrow. As he died, Nesse told Déjanire that this blood is a love potion

[27] This text having no line numbers, I use page numbers

that, sprinkled on a piece of clothing, would bring Hercule back if he strayed from their marriage vows. On the surface, this tunic does not seem to fit the general aesthetic of blood on cloth signifying the victim's suffering body. Because he slowly burns to death, Hercule's death is literally a bloodless one: “Et ce corps dénué de sang, et de vigueur/ Après tant de tourments succombe à sa langueur” (5.2. 1043-1044). At the same time, the description of the cloth encapsulates the act of Hercule's blood being spilled on it. In Act Two scene two, as Déjanire schemes to bring Hercule back to her she quotes Nesse's last words to her that are replete with dramatic irony:

> Tiens, me dit-il; et *tache*
> *Un de ses vêtements de ce sang précieux*,
> S'il jamais blessé d'autres que de tes yeux.
> Il aura la vertu de te *rendre son âme*,
> Et *le fera brûler* de sa première flamme (2.2. 474- 478 italics mine)

Déjanire believes this blood to be a kind of love potion, one which will return her husband’s unfaithful soul back to her and restore his burning love for her. However, the monster hid a very literal, deadly meaning underneath this decorous language of love. Nesse’s words effectively encapsulate the entire plot of the play. Déjanire does indeed stain one of her husband’s garments with the poisonous blood when she sees her husband has fallen in love with another woman. Hercule does indeed give up the ghost (*rendre son âme*) and he does so on a funeral pyre (*le fera brûler*) after extended scenes of slow death.

Hercule's moment of death is distilled into this account. As we later see, Hercule is first burned by the cloth and then feels he is *rendering* his soul:

Quel poison communique à ce linge fatal

La vertu qui me brûle? O tourment sans égal (3.1.646-648)

and then: "Je me sens étouffer, *je rends l'âme*" (3.1.721). He hesitates on the verge of death for two whole acts before his death on a burning pyre is related (5.1.1191-1276). The scene of violence is attenuated but extremely protracted. It is crucial that the audience never sees him die, and it is equally important that his death be not too gory. The only way to retain the proper dramatic intensity in some way is to make his death extremely slow and afford him the opportunity to describe the hidden suffering the audience cannot see.

Suggesting Hercule himself was bleeding on the cloth while onstage would have implied a too visible degree of violence for a figure of his stature during the time period. Additionally, blood in this context would have even more gruesome implications, since the other versions that feature this also show him tearing his flesh off his bones. In any case, the cloth "taché de sang précieux" is a figure onto which a succession of violent images can be projected and yet hidden decorously in its folds.

By the late 1630's, bloody cloth had fully integrated into the restrained aesthetic of violence that predominated. It can be found, used to great effect, by the more self-consciously *bienséant* playwright, Georges de Scudéry. In his *La mort de César*, performed as early as 1635 and published in 1637, the assassination scene is scrupulously abbreviated so as to, in Scudéry's words "ne pas ensanglanter la face du théâtre contre les règles" (margin of line 962). The first productions of *La mort de César* staged the murder. The curtain, not common in 1635, was added to the paratextual material when the play was printed (Moncond'huy 237-40; and Vuillermoz 117). In the printed text, the

curtain falls over the scene simultaneously with the act of murder, followed by the assassins leaving with bloody daggers. The audience thus has the experience of the scene of murder without the full impact of its violence. Or rather, the curtain signifies this moment of bloody *hors-scène*. This imaginary textual curtain did not prefigure that of the later proscenium stage. It has no practical function, either to hide changing sets or signify the end of the play. It does not have a corollary in irregular pre-classical tragedy, which would occasionally use tapestries to conceal sets before their dramatic reveal (Howe 78). Scudéry was using a rhetorical fig leaf, like Corneille would in his "Examen" of *Horace*. Corneille retroactively lessened the impact of indecorous violence by blaming the actress who played Camille for not running off the stage when attacked by her brother:

> Tous veulent que la mort de Camille en gâte la fin, et je demeure d'accord: mais je ne sais pas si tous en savent la raison. On l'attribue communément à ce qu'on voit cette mort sur Scène, ce que serait plutôt la faute de l'Actrice que la mienne, parce que quand elle voit son frère mettre l'épée à la main, la frayeur si naturelle au sexe lui doit faire prendre la fuite, et recevoir ce coup derrière le théâtre (839).

Corneille recycled a motif from the play itself in the service of its retroactive obfuscation of violence. In the play, the character Camille dies because she fails to perform her social role of hiding her feelings when her brother kills her husband: "Camille ne veut pas tenir de rôle, se prêter à la joie" (Merlin-Kajman 195). Corneille conveniently blames the *actress* playing Camille for failing to conform to gender expectations. In the same way Scudéry adapted a feature of the play itself when he excised violence from the stage. The curtain is another kind of bloody toga. It is concealment that reveals or indicates hidden violence.

This narration insists heavily on the reliability of eye witnessing with its repeated language about visuality. The speaker mentions César's vision, but he is a passive object that does not say anything or describe what he sees. He can give only a brief, dazzling glance but cannot speak. Then, there is a simultaneous disappearance and reappearance that the speaker interprets as an apotheosis. In cinematic terms, this is a kind of jump cut where the speaker intuits a connection between two disparate images. The account insists too much on the reliability of vision and at the same time indicates its limits. Rather than subjective, immediately suspending all accusations and incitements of violence, he instead turns attention to commemoration (5. 6. 1278-1281). The end result is a deflection away from the fragile physical body into an image of glory. These scenes stage a depersonalization of César, who, stripped of body and habitus, is left with a memory, dependent on the eyes and words of others.

In the penultimate scene, a bloody toga replaces the represented assassination. César's toga has all of the features of the curtain scene imbedded on its rent surface. It bears the imprint both of the daggers that enter the body and the blood which, in escaping, indicates the moment the soul escapes the body. The toga's rhetorical force takes center stage, mediated by Marc-Antoine as chief mourner, as I analyzed in the introduction. Here, I will focus on César's apotheosis. Living individuals relate each step in the process of César's apotheosis, in so doing mitigating the terrifying impact of César's death. The assassinated emperor makes no more appearances in the play, even though he is deified. What was in *Hercule mourant* a spectacular scene of apotheosis is in *La mort de César* a brief description. A character relates that he witnessed César

appearing and ascending to heaven. In relating the tale, he refers to the other character as listeners with one common ear: “SENATEURS, apprenez la plus grande merveille,/ Qui peut-être jamais ait frappé votre oreille" (5.7.1259-1260). He, on the other hand, describes what happens with many references to his eyes, as if to validate his status as an eyewitness:

> Mon œil a *vu* César plus grand que de coutume,
> D’un port majestueux, d’un regard éclatant
> Qui s’élevait sur Rome; & qui dans un instant
> Par cette agilité dont une âme est pourvue
> A traversé les airs, ayant laissé *ma vue*:
> Mais au même moment s'est fait voir *à mes yeux*,
> Un Astre tout nouveau qui brillait dans les Cieux
> Qu’aucun ne doute ici de ce rapport fidèle. (Scudéry 5.7.1264-1271 italics mine)

The concerned citizen refers to his eyes in part to validate his incredible story. These repeated references to vision also underscore the relative distance the other characters have to the absent scene, their ear dependent on how faithfully he transcribes into language what his eyes have seen. Repeated references to sight also serve to stress the authenticity of César’s apotheosis. Simultaneous with César leaving the earth, a star appeared in the sky. Marc-Antoine interprets this coincidence as signifying that César has been deified. Once he establishes this narrative of events, sight becomes ancillary, since César’s many noble self-sacrifices themselves authorize this claim:

> Qui voudrait refuser son cœur même en offrande
> À ce Dieu, qu’a fait tel une vertu si grande

Pour croire ce miracle il ne faut point le voir. (Scudéry 5.7.1279-1281)

This simultaneous disappearance and reappearance elides the contingent, subjective nature of vision. It also masks the connection between presumed apotheosis and the denial of loss. César has to emerge grander, more forceful, and more brilliant after death in order for his death to be glorious instead of gory. In plays such as *Hercule mourant*, this effect takes the form of staging that obscures the fragility of the mortal body and dissimulates or naturalizes it within a narrative of heroic sacrifice. In *La mort de César*, language performs this function. *Cinna* stages another kind of apotheosis, achieved through the emperor's nonviolent self-sacrifice. The play ends with the empress Livie's prophetic vision of the Pax Romana. This dramatic peripetea necessarily forecloses a horrific image of the suffering body, one that conjures the image of total social disintegration. Auguste successfully replaces bloody cloth with a purple one**.** He is only able to do so after making his potential loss felt. When his death is a public danger, do the conspirators accept his gift.

In *Cinna*, Auguste undergoes a kind of apotheosis after his act of clemency. He does so by combining exemplary self-mastery with self-presentation. Scholars emphasize different aspects of this transformation, its basis, and its effects on the former conspirators and spectators. In all of these accounts Auguste becomes deified without needing to die. The transformation is both internal and symbolic. It is also spectacular, presenting the spectacle of violence entirely through language and using it to motivate action onstage.

Auguste's self-mastery comes about when he sacrifices his anger to his duty as a sovereign. This mastery being temporary and contingent, copious descriptions of

Auguste's apotheosis obscure its precarity. For some scholars, notably Doubrovsky, this apotheosis is an escape from the dialectic of history. Auguste apotheosizes by synthesizing into one person hero and king, figures that form a dialectic relationship in Corneille's previous works *Le Cid* and *Horace* (Doubrovsky 187). In presenting Auguste as outside of history, the play denies the precarity of monarchic and conflicting beliefs. It ends with a kind of mystification of the insufficiencies of monarchic authority (Doubrovsky 217-20). Immortality seems to operate as a symbolic substitution that stands in for or supplements the figure of the monarch.

For other scholars, Auguste substitutes himself for the conspirator's murdered biological fathers. Lyons posits that imperialism allows subjects to have multiple fathers and in so doing breaks the link between generations of rowdy aristocrats. In place of sterility, Auguste proposes adoption as a solution to deal with the political implications of not having an heir in a culture where power transferred intergenerationally:

> Significantly, Livie does not explicitly adapt this mimetic account, even though we can use elements of her speech to construct it. She instead casts Auguste as nonproductive, as a historical agent without *fruit*. This expression harks back to the republican insistence, right from Emilie's initial speech, on biological generation. The Augustan side is biologically sterile; it must proceed by adopting, co-opting, and realigning "natural" or traditional filiations. (106).

Auguste as an adoptive father exerts a superior degree of authority one could also qualify as spiritual or sacramental. This authority breaks the chain of filation that also replicated internecine violence. For Fumaroli, Auguste exercises imperial authority by establishing himself as a spiritual father of the body politic:

> *Aime Cinna, ma fille!* Étrange parole, car depuis le début de la pièce, nous savons bien que rien n'est moins douteux à Rome que cet amour […]. Mais Auguste a enfin conquis le droit, en père spirituel, en grand prêtre, et en chef légitime, de bénir publiquement. C'est au fond de l'acquiescement des deux "amants" à cette bénédiction publique, par la bouche d'Auguste, de cette union depuis longtemps indissoluble, qu'Auguste reçoit le titre de père, de prêtre, et de roi. (410)

He can only redirect Cinna and Emilie's existing passions, transforming their love for one another as a gift they receive from him. For Greenberg, this substitution redirects Emilie's incestuous desire for Auguste. The male characters in the play form a composite representation of violence:

> For Emilie, at least, the obsessive scene that marks her entry into the world of passion and into the world of politics is a primal vision of blood and of carnage, an ambiguous mirror where the massacred innocent reflects the coupling of killer and lover. In her obsession, Emilie can only oscillate between these two poles. Just as it is impossible for Emilie to separate in her fantasy/discourse her father from Auguste, so too does this fantasy render Auguste indistinguishable from Cinna. (96)

Auguste alone is able to resolve this crisis because he incarnates both murderer and father:

> The only man capable of fulfilling Emilie's desire for a mate has already done so, and this act has immediately established him as the object of her hatred and, perhaps more importantly still, as the object of an unspeakable lust (98)

In this model, Auguste diffuses the combination of lust and vengeance directed toward

his person by becoming a symbolic father for both Cinna and Emilie.

The logic of substitution undergirds scholarship that de-emphasizes or denies Auguste's paternal role. Auguste does not become a father figure, but surpasses the virtue and honor of Roman forebears. For Merlin-Kajman, Auguste substitutes tyrannical personal egotism with a sovereign, dignified ego that incarnates the state. He incarnates sovereignty by subordinating his private passion for vengeance to his duty as a sovereign. Vengeance in the play is a private, tyrannical desire that acts under the guise of magnanimous self-sacrifices for Rome (50, 57). Clemency, on the other hand, is an act of extraordinary virtue and self-sacrifice, one that serves as proof of sovereign authority:

> C'est par son acte de clémence que l'empereur peut désormais légitimement incarner la loi: ayant fait prévue d'une vertu extraordinaire, sa volonté qui s'est mise au-dessus des règles ordinaires de la science politique et des passions privées prouve sa nature souveraine. (49)

By asserting the dignity of an extrordinarily virtuous egotism, Auguste presents himself as an incarnation of imperial souverignty:

> D'abord, régner, ce n'est pas simplement régner *sur* soi: c'est, absolument, produire le *moi* lui-même comme dignité, moins dans une conformité à un ordre ancien qu'en le portant à un degré de vertu sans précèdent, a un éclat publique suprême. Régner, ce n'est donc pas non plus habiter du côté du père, dont la figure ne fournit plus le modèle de la position souveraine (58)

Vengeance is no longer necessary because Auguste's performance of superior virtue and self-mastery supplants the political model of virtuous Roman forbearers.

Still focusing on the performance of honor and virtue, some scholars scrutinize

the negotiations involved in the new social order. In this body of scholarship, the substitution is a collective effort. For Posner, Auguste succeeds in winning over the conspirators because of his superior performance of nobility and its discourse. They share a common set of beliefs and language, on the basis of which they can renegotiate the balance of power. Auguste preserves Emilie and Cinna's honor, while making it dependent on him (160). For Maslan, Auguste derives his imperial authority from Cinna and Emilie's willing consent:

> While the play emphasizes the consensual nature of subjection by making it the miraculous, unforeseen effect of Augustus's clemency - and thus a sort of *deus ex machina* that resolves the play's conflicts-it also makes clear consent's ideological status and function. For what is consented to is in fact a pure relation of force. Augustus can, this particular act of clemency notwithstanding, kill the others at any time. It is only their consent to his mastery that transforms Augustus from tyrant to emperor. (57)

In their voluntary subjugation, the former conspirators substitute their desire for political satisfaction with romantic love (68). Auguste, then, requires a kind of consent as the basis of his political legitimacy, one in which love can substitute for political power.

The political impasse in which the three main characters find themselves requires a symbolic substitute to channel and transform both their desire for vengeance and the stagnant social order that associates vengeance with family honor. Scholars such as Lyons focus on the practice of adoption and other social rituals. Unnoticed is the visual symbol of bloody glorified cloth that cements this exchange. An image of the suffering body motivates the action of the play and becomes transmuted into an evocation of the

purple cloth of rank. All the major characters attempt to control the spectacle of power by instrumentalizing gory images of bloody dead bodies.

Auguste gains his sovereign authority by deflecting desire for his bloody assassination into representation, a symbolic concession of his power that leaves him and it intact. He co-opts the image of the suffering body that haunts the play. Throughout the play, the conspirators consider Auguste as a sacrificial substitute who stands in for and thus purges the community of the threat of their annihilation. Emilie and Cinna are caught in an existential crisis in which their Roman aristocratic values are impossible to live out without provoking spiraling vengeance and total social disintegration. They deny the real threat of retributive violence even as they plot to unleash it. In a sense Rome as they conceive of it is already dead, or they cannot live out their destiny as worthy descendants of Romans without dying and leading to the death of other remaining Roman aristocrats. The play is haunted by images of blood, civil war, and parricide. These images are terrifying because they suggest that patrician roman values in the aftermath of civil unrest constitute a double-bind. One must prove one's family affiliation through exemplary and bloody acts of vengeance. However, doing so all but guarantees the destruction of both the individual member of the bloodline in question and the Roman society as a whole. Spilling blood *for* one's father inevitably leads to the spilling *of* the father's blood.

Here, Auguste's "sacrifice" or murder cannot be staged, but only evoked in language several times throughout the play. Various characters conjure an image of Auguste's sacrificed body in their attempts to manage the spectacle of violence and place themselves at the origin of a new or renewed social order. Auguste diffuses potential

outbreak of retributive violence by managing this spectacle of his murdered body. He transforms this image into ostentation of his sovereign power and provides his former enemies with a symbolic concession of it in the form of the purple of rank: "Aime Cinna, ma fille, en cet illustre rang/ Préfères-en la pourpre à celle de mon sang" (1711-1712). This image conjures Cinna's fantasy of marrying Emilie while covered in Octave-Auguste's blood. The image of Cinna covered in purple cloth rather than blood is both a response to the "sanglantes images" that haunt the play and their absorption. This moment effectuates a turning away from blood and toward representation. Perhaps more importantly, the image of Cinna decked in purple striped cloth works because it conjures César's body and Octave-Auguste's simultaneously. Moreover, Emilie being is asked to accept Cinna as a replacement for her father. The traumatic image of his murder comes up several times in the play, often referred to as a "sanglante image," often a place holder for countless other questionable executions (lines 1136-1140). When Auguste-Octave says this line, he is linking several images of bloody murder that circulate in the text, managing the circulation of moving images of blood through their sublimation. The purple rank Auguste offers holds an analogous place to the bloody toga in *La mort de César*, a play whose structure demonstrably influenced Corneille's own (Moncond'huy, 201-04). In both plays, an image of a glorified, transformed figurehead consolidates the public but requires violent bloodshed in order to do so. In these plays as in others, blood shed in violence becomes transformed from a contaminating fluid into an emblem of nobility. This transformation is clearest in *Cinna*, where multivalent semiotics of blood are elaborated with the most clarity.

As in the plays I have previously discussed, blood in *Cinna* can mean life,

kinship, valor, and shame. Roman society confers social status on members who originate or repeat foundational acts of violence. More importantly, descendants of the illustrious wrongfully murdered are obliged to prove their family affiliation by the vengeful spilling of blood. These acts function as a specious resolution to social and political impasses, exacerbating existing social tensions and renewing longstanding vendettas. Once Auguste has uncovered the plot against him, he accuses Cinna of desiring to become emperor in his place, reminding him that the emperor will always be threatened by the descendants of old enemies. These descendants are in essence reincarnations of their ancestors who would certainly live up to their bloodline:

> Mais oses-tu penser que les Serviliens,
> Les Cosses, les Métels, les Pauls, les Fabiens,
> Et tant d'autres enfin de qui les grands courages
> Des héros de leur sang sont les vives images,
> Quittent le noble orgueil d'un sang si généreux
> Jusqu'à pouvoir souffrir que tu règnes sur eux? (5.1. 1534-1540)

The constant references to civil disorder compounded the sacrificial crisis surrounding the pervasive presence of blood. Blood signified the guilt and contamination of parricide in the repeated usage of the term "sanglante image." This figure appears when characters are being haunted by guilt or desire for vengeance, and at the critical moment when this haunting is resolved. It appears in the first scene of the first act, pushing Emilie to plot her vengeance: “Quand vous me présentez cette sanglante image,/ La cause de ma haine et l'effet de ma rage/ Je m'abandonne toute à vos ardents transports” (13-16); the word usage appears again in another moving scene in which Auguste-Octave takes himself to

task concerning his past involvment in retributive/preventative violence:

> De tes proscriptions les sanglantes images
>
> Où toi-même des tiens devenu le bourreau
>
> Au sein de ton Tuteur enfonças le couteau (4.2. 1136-1140).

Here, there are countless violent images repeating themselves, suggesting a never-ending cycle.

Not only are there important reverberations within the text of the traumatic image of parricide, but there is a direct intertextual reference performing a similar function. In *Cinna*, the title character describes the excesses of civil conflict while quoting directly from *Antigone* (1580) by Garnier, which I previously discussed in this chapter. In *Antigone*, Jocaste laments she slept with her son Edipe saying he was "Encore tout dégouttant du meurtre de son père (2.664-667). He was *disgusting* (*dégoûtant*) with his father's blood when he slept with his mother. It is a visceral image of the horror of bloodly fluids that should *not* be mixed, heightening the evocation of patricide with an equally gory reference to incest. In contrast, in *Cinna*, the lines refer to a son who kills his father and collects ransom while dripping (*dégouttant*) blood: "*Le fils tout dégouttant du meurtre de son père*/ Et sa tête à la main demandant son salaire" (201-02). This studied recontextualisation and redeployment of *Antigone* removes the reference to incest while also changing the gory term "disgusting" to the more acceptable "dripping." Though holding his father's head in his hand is quite disgusting in its own way, the emphasis is on the violation to the social body that parricide manifests, the banalization of murder in its commodification. The earlier version intensifies the image with reference to the contaminating exchange of sexual and hematic bodily fluids. In *Cinna* there are no

murders per se of biological fathers, but there is the endless killing of relatives and mentors, expiated in further bloodshed. Though the nuances of its political message may not have been appreciable fifty years on, the traumatic image of the suffering abject body was an effective and evocative image. [28]

Proposed bloodshed does not seem to liberate the characters who cling to it as a coping strategy. When Auguste realizes his confidants have been trying to assassinate him, he admits similar betrayals: "Rends un sang infidèle à l'infidélité" (5.1.1145). While his death may be just, giving his guilty blood to the guilty is not the same thing as atoning for innocent blood. It merely produces more guilty blood. He comes to this realization when he rejects passivity and contemplates a return to violent retribution: "Mais quoi! toujours du sang, et toujours des supplices! […] Et le sang répandu des milles conjurés/ rend mes jours plus maudits, et non plus assurés" (5. 1.1162, 1165). Auguste and Cinna are insufficient sacrificial substitutes because there is ultimately nothing to differentiate them.

At the same time, all the characters project collective trauma and associated guilt onto Auguste. As in other plays of this period, in *Cinna* the term "rougir" presents a connection between violence and shame, underlining the need to purge one's honor by spilling more blood. Auguste incarnates the origin of a complex, ongoing political conflict and as such a culpable sign of civil war's collective shame. When Cinna describes Auguste's bloodlust he describes it as making sea and land blush or redden: "de ses proscriptions rougir la Terre et l'Onde" (3.4. 941). Later, when the emperor reflects on his past and feels remorse, he expresses it in similar terms: "songe aux fleuves de sang où

[28] It is also a canny reference because of the overt connections Garnier made between his plays and contemporary unrest (Beaudin 7-8, 14-17, 48).

ton bras s'est baigné/ De combien ont rougi les champs de Macédoine" (4.2.1132-1133). Not only has Auguste caused his empire to redden with guilty blood, but he himself is splashed with it.

Early in the play, Auguste perceives the futility of blood feud. Other characters are locked in the cycle of violence and misrecognize it as liberation. Throughout the play, characters fantasize spilling Auguste's blood to expunge their persistent shame. This image of the emperor and his murderer bathed in his blood is tantalizing but impossible even to contemplate. To carry out their plot would have real, unthinkable consequences. It takes a character less scrupulous about asserting his family honor to recognize some of the dangers inherent in their project. Maxime is such a character. He reminds Cinna that César's assassination merely solidified the imperialism the conspirators attempted to dismantle. Cinna believes he and his fellow conspirators will be successful because they will be more prudent than Cassie:

CINNA

La faute de Cassie, et ses terreurs paniques,

Ont fait rentrer l'État sous des lois tyranniques;

Mais nous ne verrons point de pareils accidents,

Lorsque Rome suivra des chefs moins imprudents.

MAXIME

Nous sommes encore loin de mettre en évidence

Si nous nous conduisons avec plus de prudence. (2.2.669-674)

Cinna believes he can make a clean break with the past even as he is caught in the pernicious ideology of retributive violence. He is far from prudient,but instead waxes

eloquent about his murderous plans. In doing so, he nearly outs Emilie as part of the conspiracy. Only then does he see their imprudence:

Ami, dans ce palais on peut nous écouter,

Et nous parlons peut-être avec trop d'*imprudence* (2.2. 704-705, italics mine)

In a sense, Cinna cannot fully accept the contingent and precarious nature of the plot they have undertaken. A haunting image of social unrest and spiraling retributive violence pervades their descriptions of just vengeance.

Cinna is far more likely to end up covered in his own blood should he publicly murder Auguste. Even as Emilie and Cinna acknowledge this possibility, they deny it and focus on Auguste's blood rather than Cinna's own.

Te demander du sang, c'est exposer le tien:

D'une si haute place on n'abat point de têtes

Sans attirer sur soi mille et mille tempêtes;

L'issue en est douteuse, et le péril certain (1.1. 24-27)

Then she represses this fear with an illogical statement:

Amour, sers mon devoir, et ne le combats plus:

Lui céder, c'est ta gloire, et le vaincre, ta honte:

Montre-toi généreux, souffrant qu'il te surmonte;

Plus tu lui donneras, plus il te va donner,

Et ne triomphera que pour te couronner. (1.1.48-52)

How can her Duty give anything to her Love, if her lover is dead? She continues in a similar vein in the next scene, when her confidant Fulvie reminds her that Cinna will almost certainly die as a result of attempting assassination

FULVIE

Votre amour à ce prix n'est qu'un présent funeste

Qui porte à votre amant sa perte manifeste.

Pensez mieux, Emilie, à quoi vous l'exposez,

Combien à cet écueil se sont déjà brisés;

Ne vous aveuglez point quand sa mort est visible.

ÉMILIE

Ah ! tu sais me frapper par où je suis sensible.

Quand je songe aux dangers que je lui fais courir,

La crainte de sa mort me fait déjà mourir (1.2.105-113)

She forecloses any real possibility that Cinna could die. Emilie first claims that Cinna could very well make it out alive: “Cinna n'est pas perdu pour être hasardé” (1.2.127). However, her very next lines list very legitimate concerns about Cinna’s safety that she does not address:

De quelques légions qu'Auguste soit gardé,

Quelque soin qu'il se donne et quelque ordre qu'il tienne,

Qui méprise sa vie est maître de la sienne. (1.2. 128-130)

Stoic resignation in the face of death does not prevent one from being killed. That Auguste is guarded by one or more *legions* of soldiers and that the conspirators may be careless suggests that Cinna is not likely to escape with his life. Contemporary dictionaries defined a legion as a group of between 6,000 and 12,500 soldiers (“légion,” Nicot). Figuratively, it refers to “un trop grand nombre” (“légion,” Academie). It is unreasonable that Cinna could withstand the assault of a too great number of adversaries.

Emilie does not honestly address these concerns, but deflects the question of life or death of her lover into one about honor and glory. Honor and glory seem to be code for sacrifice and martyrdom. Auguste and Cinna become interchangeable sacrifices, either one of which would satisfy Emilie's obligation to her dead father:

> Plus le péril est grand, plus doux en est le fruit;
> La vertu nous y jette, et la gloire le suit.
> Quoi qu'il en soit, qu'Auguste ou que Cinna périsse,
> Aux mânes paternels je dois ce sacrifice (1.2.131-134)

Why would her father's ghost be satisfied by Cinna's blood, if he is not his murderer? If any blood will do, why would Emilie risk that of her lover? She seems to be thinking here in terms of her own sacrifice, offering up Cinna's life in a gesture of self-abnegation and filial duty.

Cinna also contemplates a kind of self-sacrifice by proxy, one in which the spectacle of his own death is foreclosed. When he does discuss the dangers involved, he deflects, shifting immediately into either a discussion of the glory the assassination will bring him, or the sublime pleasure of dying for his mistress.

> Demain au Capitole il fait un sacrifice;
> Qu'il en soit la victime, et faisons en ces lieux
> Justice à tout le monde, à la face des dieux: (1.3.230-232)

The line "*Qu'il en soit* la victime" echos Emilie's line of "Quoi qu'il en soit, qu'Auguste ou que Cinna périsse." Instead of acting as a performative subjunctive, Cinna's proclamation becomes a hypothetical. Thus, in this uncertain venture, *perhaps* Auguste will be the victim, or *perhaps* Cinna will. Cinna's concern focuses on exhibiting his

honor and family affiliation in the blow that will shed Auguste's blood:

> Et je veux pour signale que cette même main
>
> Lui donne, au lieu d'encens, d'un poignard dans le sein.
>
> Ainsi d'un coup mortel la victime frappée
>
> Fera voir si je suis du sang du grand Pompée; (1.3.235-238)

For Lyons, Cinna's desire to show his blood, being unrealizable without dying, finds its substitute in murdering Auguste. Cinna wants to prove that he is a real descendant of Pompée through an exemplary act of vengeance. Cinna's plan to kill Auguste in the middle of a ritual animal sacrifice is ultimately an indirect means of showing that Cinna is the blood of Pompée. To "show what he is made of" in this sense is impossible without killing himself (Lyons, "Unseen Space" 86). This proposed sacrifice takes the form of a *récit*, a description of actions proposed to occur offstage. Lyons posits that such events supposed to occur offstage are actually in the realm of fantasy and error:

> In Corneille's theatre, the *récit* tends to be impure in an even more radical way, by pretending to be an account of truth when it is illusion and self-deception. The information of Cornelian *récits* is usually false or misleading, making the offstage the place of error and fantasy, not because error occurs offstage but instead because this invisible space is figuratively the place into which the narrators project their interpretations or obsessions (Lyons, "Unseen Space" 77)

Furthermore, as proposed future action, this space inhabits an even further remote part of the offstage and is thus even more misleading (Lyons, "Unseen Space" 81). Lyons' argument suggests that Cinna is unreasonable in his desire to show his blood and thus resorts to a fantasy substitute. To build on Lyons' argument, one could note that Cinna

cannot contemplate this action that would destroy him because it is terrifying and suggests an untenable double-bind. That is to say, he cannot both live and live up to his family name. Moreover, in dying, Cinna will simply cause Pompée's blood to be shed yet again and in turn catalyze a continuing escalation in retributive violence.

Instead, Cinna imagines himself orchestrating a public spectacle decked in Auguste's blood. He fantasizes about marrying Emilie still bloodied from the assassination and standing on Auguste's ashes (or dead body): " Je veux joindre à sa main ma main ensanglantée, / L'épouser sur sa cendre" (2.2. 698-99). He imagines that, having killed Auguste at the temple, he will then marry Emilie. In addition to realizing significant savings on wedding costs, Cinna forecloses contemplation of the inevitable consequences of assassination. They return with a vengeance. This wedding scenario is a strange replaying of Caesar's funeral. Cinna's fantasy entails a public ritual involving a dead emperor's body and a blood-spattered object (his hand and, by extension, his garment). In this version of events, Cinna becomes Caesar's toga, taking attention away from the emperor's dead body. Cinna wants to manage the spectacle of violence and be the star of the show. However, he is far more likely to become the *stabbed* of the show.

Auguste is able to bring this nonviolent resolution about because he holds a kind of potential violence in reserve. The emperor manages the circulation of images of violence by deflecting them into representations of sovereignty and the status system under his control. In several instances during the play, Auguste gains the upper hand by redeploying the scene of sacrifice the conspirators prepare. He stages a dramatic scene of accusation, one in which Cinna is finally dumbfounded by Auguste's *coup de théâtre*. The emperor begins by requiring Cinna's silence, followed by a lengthy enumeration of

the many gifts and benefits he lavished on his subject. Auguste reveals his knowledge of the plot with a dramatic peripeteia. He instrumentalizes a scene of violence that was meant to destroy him, transforming it into one in that solidifies his power over the conspirator. This revelation appears as an intrusion of violence, interrupting the narrative of his generosity:

> Tu t'en souviens, Cinna, tant d'heure et tant de gloire
> Ne peuvent pas sitôt sortir de ta mémoire;
> Mais ce *qu'on ne pourrait jamais s'imaginer*,
> Cinna, tu t'en souviens, et veux *m'assassiner*. (5.1.1473-1476 italics mine)

Instead of an expiation ritual that will prove Cinna's honor, Auguste recasts it as an unimaginably shocking ingratitude. Cinna makes one attempt to deny the plot, hoping that Auguste is merely suspicious and has no hard evidence (5.1.1477-1478). Auguste then continues to reprise Cinna's own words, replaying the imagined scenario of assassination:

> Écoute cependant, et tiens mieux ta parole.
> Tu veux m'assassiner demain, au Capitole,
> Pendant le sacrifice, et ta main pour signal
> La moitié de tes gens doit occuper la porte,
> L'autre moitié te suivre et te prêter main-forte.
> Ai-je de bons avis, ou de mauvais soupçons? (5.1. 1481-1487)

In repeating Cinna's lines from Act I, Auguste demonstrates that he knows the details of the plot and must have been well informed. He also stages a theatrical replaying of the proposed event, one devoid of symbolic expiation. Auguste distinguishes between the

animal sacrifice and the assassination attempt Cinna conflated. Auguste is so skilled at coopting Cinna's planned demonstration of spectacular power that Cinna is finally at a loss for words (5.1.1542). Cinna is eventually able to qualify the plot as "beau" and "illustre" but does not contradict Auguste in any substantive way. Cinna can no longer evoke the image of the emperor's dead body as a way to prove his valor and family affiliation. Auguste has taken over the representation of his own assassination, disempowering the would-be assassins. From this point on in the play, the conspirators can only evoke the valor and distinction they may find in their own deaths.

Auguste's mastery over the representation of violence persists after his act of clemency. The purple rank he gives Cinna, which substitutes for his purple blood, functions as part of a potlatch exchange, a competitive gift-giving Auguste is guaranteed to win. Cinna will be covered in purple, but it will signify his subjugation within this new system of exchange. Whereas before he imagined proving his illustrious family affiliation by covering himself in Auguste's blood, blood's replacement subordinates him within a new monarchic order. Importantly, by qualifying his own blood as purple, Auguste presents it as sacred or illustrious. Clearly he is aware of the sacred nature of the assassination attempt, even though he removed it from his account of the plot. Even in language that conjures his own bloody murder, Auguste choses the decorous, regal, and glorified term *pourpre* to refer to his blood. This language, normally used to describe the blood of martyrs, re-casts the assassination plot as a sacrilege. *Pourpre* absorbs a terrifying, moving image of parricide but denies the possibility of death and social upheaval this image implies. Auguste ennobles himself without having to show his blood. He proves adept at staging moving public spectacle by seamlessly integrating that of the

failed assassination attempt. We should remember that Cinna's fantasy was first to sacrifice Auguste at the temple and then marry Emilie still covered in bloody gore. At the end of the play, Auguste orders both the marriage and these fatal sacrifices for the following day (5.2.1740, 5.2.1777). Cinna will likely wear purple at these ceremonies. His fantasy, then, will be realized in part, but without the actual assassination. Far from disappearing, this violence transforms into an image of *Auguste*'s victory. He has stolen Cinna's show and, in the ultimate passive-aggressive move, claims he himself will forget the plot while memorializing it. In the final couplet, *publier* rhymes with *oublier*. Everyone, including the would-be assassins, will hear about the failed assassination attempt. It will become public knowledge and then legend. Auguste's forgetting is another kind of dissimulation and amplification. He memorializes an attempt on his life, even restaging it with evocative images. At the same time, he deflects and denies the violence that undergirds this spectacle.

Conclusion

This chapter has traced one trajectory that violence took through several decades of French theater by examining the material performance of blood on the stage. Blood and bloody cloth created an illusory but compelling presence of bodily suffering. They did so by amplifying terror while dissimulating it behind images of glory. Far from being attenuated substitutes, blood and bloody cloth serve to convey a vivid image of bodily suffering. Freighted with additional significance that exacerbated the stakes of suffering, these very material and often gristly objects became the key vehicle by which performances of violence displayed and played with status, valor and family affiliation. If

the very images that delighted audiences were also horrifying, they were able to accomplish this paradoxical double bill by replaying collective trauma and conjuring the fear of total social disintegration. It could be more effective than dead bodies alone because it attenuated the reality of their pain and suffering just as much as it distilled it into a martyrological corollary. Ultimately, what was sublimated is not merely violence but how it was essential to social cohesion as much as it threatened it with rupture.

In Chapter 3, we will move from bloody cloth to sisters who mourned brothers. We should be clear that women are not objects when we compare how they figured the aesthetic of violence to that of cloth and dagger. Instead, these plays featured eponymous characters who used their bodies as props. In doing so, they figured the disappeared bodies of their dead brothers and gave them a voice. In a sense, Antigone and Maria(m)ne have the status of Marc-Antoine, who cannily took center stage by giving voice to César's gory toga. And yet, as we will see, there is a limit to the agency these women could achieve. They figured both the particular constraints of early modern women and the limits of political intervention for all subjects. They represent this limit in part because women's political agency receeded as Salic Law became increasingly solidified.

Chapter III: *Standing for Brothers: Early Modern Maria(m)nes and Antigones*

Introduction

In his *Pratique du Théâtre*, l'abbé d'Aubignac describes the audience's reaction during the first performance of *Pyrame et Thisbé* (1621):

> sitôt qu'il prend son épée pour s'immoler aux mânes de celle qui l'avait prévenu, et laver sa négligence dans son propre sang, il n'y a pas un des spectateurs qui ne frémisse et j'ai vu dans cette occasion une jeune fille qui n'avait encore jamais été à la Comédie, dire à sa Mère, qu'il fallait avertir cet amant que sa Maîtresse n'était pas morte tant il est vrai que ce moment portait les Spectateurs dans les intérêts de ce personnage (333-34)

In this famous anecdote, the rhetorical force of the drawn dagger attracts everyone's attention, its compelling theatrical illusion shining out amid what he considers a vast sea of artificial verbiage (334). To illustrate this phenomenon, d'Aubignac then focuses on one spectator, who felt compelled to intervene in the action of the play. A young girl, not fully understanding what a play was, naively believed she could and ought to tell the character Pyrame to not commit suicide. Like audience members, male and female characters in compelling tragedies often engaged in futile attempts to intervene in the action of the play, for instance to stop violence from occurring or to bring the guilty to justice. Instead of thinking of this girl as an imperfect spectator, what if we think of her as a model for the limits of agency, doomed to fail as she attempts to act on behalf of others?

Women characters in the plays I study were not docile figures of spectatorship, but represent active, if futile, engagement on- and offstage. Because their means of

engagement are necessarily indirect, selfness, and doomed to fail, they have more freedom to tangle with tyrants; the most extensive scenes of accusation therefore feature women. A strikingly large number of these are women who, like the spectator above, perhaps do not know their efforts would be futile. In any case, they certainly do not mind making a scene. In Robert Garnier's *Antigone* (circa 1580), Alexandre Hardy's *Mariamne* (circa 1610), Tristan l'Hermite's *La Mariane* (1637) and Jean de Rotrou's *Antigone* (1638), the eponymous characters implicate themselves in the action and take a bold stand against tyrannical rule. Their interventions momentarily halted the ceremonial spectacle of state power.

While their efforts are ill-fated, so were those of women off-stage who were experiencing serious setbacks as they navigated tortuously shifting power dynamics. In Tristan l'Hermite's *La Mariane* and Jean de Rotrou's *Antigone*, incestuously inflected brother-sister bonds were empowering for women in plays but only temporarily. This strategy was doomed to fail in the long term, and the final act of these plays wrote these women out of the larger historical narrative. Women could only hope their suicidal actions would have larger repercussions for tyrants. In the plays I study, incest was a way to make women prominent social actors who intervened on behalf of disappeared brothers. However, it was a failed strategy that necessitates the death of the women in question. It thus became an ideal way to present tyrannicide as a futile and impossible task.

As my introduction explores in depth, such scenes of confrontation between tyrants and subjects were rare and heavily circumscribed. Women frequently took center stage during these moments. Scholars give two rationales for this state of affairs.

Generally, these women attempted to defend themselves against a tyrant's disordered sexual desire or figure the tyrant's inability to differentiate particular passion and public duty (Merlin-Kajman 120; Ekstein 121),[29]

Some scholars observe that women counter tyrants in order to defend what they believe to be a legitimate bloodline. Lisa Michel argues that such a stance became necessary beginning in the 1640s, as tyrannicide in any form was increasingly circumscribed (128). Having women defend bloodline in this way had unique benefits. Because of the nature of Salic law as it became confirmed during this time period, women acting using this rationale could not do so on their own behalf. Hélène Bilis argues that Dircé in *Oedipe* (1659) cannot assert her own rights to the throne :

> However, in spite of her bloodline and allegiance to her father, the deceased king, Dircé's own claims go unheeded because she is physically incapable of defending the city and recapturing the throne. In light of the contemporary context of Salic Law, Corneille's decision to give Œdipe a younger sister, not a brother, is significant, for it establishes a scenario in which each character lacks one of the necessary prerequisites for ensuring his or her place on the throne: ability or blood. Dircé, despite her accusations of usurpation, remains physically incapable of securing the throne for herself. Without the ability to capture the throne, her faith in royal essence as a designating power remains thwarted. ("Corneille's Oedipe" 884)

[29] For a different take on the implications of female chastity in the martyr-tyrant dyad, see Walter Benjamin (69-74).

Of course, Dircé backtracks immediately when she discovers Oedipe is her brother (4.5.10-14). In doing so she is able to act in favor of her bloodline, since she cannot act on her own behalf directly.

The above observations about women and tyrants hold for the plays I study. Incestuously coded bonds allowed women to defend themselves against tyrant's sexual desire. Acting on behalf of one's blood relatives was a means to enter the political fray on behalf of another. In earlier tragedies by Hardy and Garnier, women reminded tyrants of dead and disappeared family members and placed themselves in a nexus of familial connections. In later tragedies by l'Hermite and Rotrou, exclusive incestuous bonds help the eponymous characters halt the exchange of women. In the plays between 1580 and 1638 that I study, women achieved a limited amount of agency in acting on behalf of brothers. Their agency was relational, derived through indirect action when they stood for others. For example, endogamy and widowhood were major sources of limited agency.

Even through these indirect, apparently apolitical means, however, there is no way to succeed in countering tyrants. Though some scholarship on pre-classical theater makes a strong case for the ways in which theater encouraged critical debate and discussions on the contingency of power, tyrannicide itself is a major exception in theater. As I have outlined in the introduction, Christian Biet argues for a theater that encouraged debate and engaged spectatorship. However, these plays curtailed or heavily circumscribed tyrannicide just as much as later drama, using different techniques. This chapter will provide a corrective to Biet's reading of pre-classical drama and posit that the 1630s dovetailed with Katherine Ibbett's findings on women in 1640s martyr dramas, in which docile female attendants eclipse the suffering bodies of victims of state violence

and thus style political disengagement for the audience.

In the plays I study, women are far from docile, even when they figure failed dissent and futile active engagement. There was simply a shift in how this circumscription was accomplished. Between 1580 and 1621 that failure occurred because scenes of accusations were abruptly truncated. Between 1621 and 1638, when gory violence was no longer an alternative, coding their interventions as incestuously-inflected mourning set them up as doomed to fail because, as Maureen Quilligan argues, incest is always a failed strategy. This later generation of theater, while it focused with greater detail on futile female agency, also detracted from the implications of the scene of violence.

I establish this thesis by carefully studying the changes later authors made. In the case of l'Hermite's *La Mariane*, the author frequently excised the most controversial scenes of confrontation and moved them offstage. Assessing Rotrou's *Antigone* is more complex. Rotrou did not simply adapt Garnier's play, but "contaminated" many classical sources, including Luigi Alamanni's 1527 translation of Sophocles' *Antigone* and Erasmo Da Valvasone's 1570 translation of Statius's *Thebaid* in such a away as to make the eponymous figure a better mirror for her brother.

Agency, Affect, Incest

The most obvious instance of female empowerment derived through standing for men in a patriarchal system is regency. When kings died or became incapacitated, queen consorts were frequently named as regents to reign on behalf of their sons while they were young, though regents frequently retained extensive powers long after their sons

reached the age of majority.[30] The period between 1580 and 1617 featured such two regents. Catherine de Médicis, regent for Charles IX and Henri III, died in 1589. The fortunes of Marie de Médicis, regent for Louis XIII, waned after the assassination of her favorite, Concino Concini, in 1617 (Duncinni 314). After the *Journée des Dupes* on November 10, 1630, Marie de Médicis definitively lost her hold on political authority (Laverny 151). Thus it is not surprising that during the period 1580 to 1637 there was not a consistent theme of regency as a source of female empowerment. In fact, it was endogamous relationships, rather than exogamous ones, which gave women the opportunity to enter the fray of public debate and attempt to obtain justice for their brothers.

For the purposes of this chapter, female agency will refer to the facility with which certain female characters exit their traditional role as an object of exchange between men, entering a more complicated and potentially empowering relationship with symbolic representation. Extrapolating from work on the authority early modern women derived from both endogamous social networks and widowhood, I demonstrate that Antigone and Mariane derive agency though their strong connection with a dead brother. In mourning, these women become something akin to widows. Comparing the many adaptations and repetitions with a difference which Rotrou and l'Hermite performed as they drew on their early modern and classical sources, this chapter considers the 1630s as the apogee of a certain type of highly visible female protagonist with a great deal of agency – albeit within fairly well-defined constraints. Tracing the shifts that the depiction of female protagonists underwent, this chapter highlights how these figures merge with,

[30] For a more extensive treatment, see Crawford (24-59).

and then fully replace, the spectacle of the suffering body. In doing so, these figures were part of an aesthetics which instrumentalized and circumscribed the theatrical suffering body's ability to catalyze and motivate audiences.

Rotrou's Antigone and l'Hermite's Mariane impersonated their lost siblings, standing for them as an act of commemoration that became one of defiance. For instance, Mariane insists on the physical resemblance between herself and her brother when she mourns his death. Their sameness goes beyond the grave. As Merlin-Kajman notes, the pair have the same face, and Aristobule calls for Mariane in Hérode's vision, suggesting an affinity between them or a kind of indistinction (161). As I will argue, this sameness catalyzes Mariane's choice to witness to her brother's disappeared body.

Visibility is in many ways a double-edged sword. The means by which figures of spectatorship became more visible are the very ones that distance scenes of shocking violence further from the actual spectators and impose a predetermined reading of their importance. Similarly, in gaining a measure of agency as chief mourners, Antigone and Mariane shift attention away from actual violence done to actual bodies. As the doubles of their brothers, these characters signified the foreclosed suffering body's hallucinatory return. Their portrayals, especially those that present them as the doubles of their brothers, were inflected with a language of ghostliness. Such a state of affairs should not be surprising. Incest and widowhood, while empowering for women, were conceived of as a kind of death.

Early modern women could achieve a measure of autonomy through incest, or relationships within kinship networks that stand for or replace exogamy. Beginning in the renaissance, incest-inflected kinship alliances often empowered women to halt their

symbolic exchange within homosocial male bonds (Quilligan 1, 28). While critical focus on exogamy has reinforced an understanding of women's role as a link between men, Quilligan cautions against this reading, positing that excluding intra-family dynamics misrepresents the real ways early modern women were able to gain agency (23-24). She identifies the anxiety this high-stakes transgressive agency caused by considering the frequency with which it was presented alongside the specter of a non-normative endogamous sexual relationship (7), and the extent to which these relationships were policed or punished within drama (5, 234-35). Female characters in renaissance English plays who chose endogamous relationships generally faced death. Quilligan argues that the daughter-father relationship in King Lear would have been understood as analogous to that of a then widely recognized Oedipus-Antigone incestuous dyad (233). *King Lear*'s Cordelia and other women represented in these dyads achieved a comparative degree of agency in exchange for their lives. In early modern French theater, Antigone, Mariane, and their sisters behaved in similar ways and receive the same divine punishment. Unlike Shakespeare's Cordelia, however, Rotrou's Antigone and l'Hermite's chose to represent their brothers publicly. These incestuous ties were a chosen source of futile agency.

Studying these French plays can widen the scope and impact of Quilligan's findings. *Antigone* and *La Mariane* linked incestuous over-identification with the rhetoric of mourning, further opening possibilities for women to take on non-normative roles in society as the doubles of men. Beyond the empowering options for women that endogamous rapports provided, the language of mourning in early modern plays featuring Antigone and Mariane empowered these figures by presenting them as widows. Antigone and Mariane's incestuous ties with their respective brothers operated to the exclusion of

their marital ties. Because these brothers who replaced or stood in for their husbands were dead, this mourning was inflected with the language of widowhood that it also superceded.

Widowhood, like endogamy, afforded early modern women some measure of autonomy within a patriarchal system. This relationship was one based on the contemporary notion of the married couple as a neoplatonic Androgyne. As his other half, the surviving widow could act as a placeholder for her dead husband. Contemporary examples of this rhetoric were representations of Catherine de Médicis as Artemisia, Mausoleus' widow, famous for creating the Mausoleum for her dead husband and for acting as regent during her son's minority. Catherine derived her authority through acts of commemoration which allowed her to act as Henri II's placeholder (ffolliott 227-28).

Katherine-Artémise reinforced her public persona as loyal widow and mother in the way in which she presented her commissioning of the Valois mausoleum and related monuments for Henri II. In many examples of royal propaganda, Catherine is presented as having incorporated her dead husband's heart, enabling him to live through her (ffolliott 232). Hoogvliet cites two examples of this propaganda. First, Henri II's heart burial monument featured a now-effaced sonnet by Ronsard telling the reader "not to marvel that the heart of such a great king could reside in such a small vase, because Catherine carried his real heart in her breast" (112). The second is a similar reference in the account of a 1571 royal entry into Paris (112). Hoogvliet argues that these examples are "hints" that refer to Artemesia's imbibing of her husband's ashes (112). More than a hint, it is rather a transposition of this myth into neoplatonic terms. That is to say, Catherine did not incorporate her husband's physical heart, but through the mystic union

of marriage took on his "real heart" meaning his larger-than-life *courage*, which in the early modern sense was the energy, personality or moral force of the individual ("courage," ARTFL, CNRTL). In presenting herself as having taken on the dead king's fortitude and personality, Catherine de Médicis had clearly mastered and transformed the existing lexical field of widowhood. At the same time, the conditions of possibility for this female agency were limiting, as were any exercised in a patriarchal system. Such power was often thought of as deadly, the constraints associated were seen as masochistic. Widows were thought of as already dead and imbued with the power to kill should they remarry (Llewellyn 214-18). Like incest, widowhood was considered dangerous both for the women in question and for society as a whole. Both statuses were transgressive in the same way. If incest is a kind of halting of the exchange of women, widowhood indicates this halt has already occurred. Plays featuring eponymous characters Antigone and Mariane in the 1630s capitalize on these two kinds of transgressive agency. They channel the language of widowhood to describe an incestuous rapport with a brother.

Rotrou's Antigone and l'Hermite's Mariane are symbols of an active political engagement that is doomed to fail. They are active, engaged agents that teach the limits of political engagement. They are also a way to take attention away from dead brothers. The closest analogy to my observations are framing devices that distanced violence from the audience, reducing and containing its impact and narrowing the scope of political interpretations that occurred over the first third of the seventeenth century. Again, this is not to suggest that earlier theater was by contrast transgressive and thought provoking in every respect. Early theater didn't need a proscenium arch**,** *mise en abime* or other

devices to distance violence. This distancing was achieved by truncating scenes of accusation between tyrants and finding sacrificial substitutes. The spectacle of violence, not the lack thereof, was used to obfuscate. Similarly, eponymous characters in Hardy's *Mariamne* and Garnier's *Antigone* found their agency circumscribed through truncation and explicit violence rather than incestuous coding.

In the beginning of the seventeenth century, theatrical aesthetics catalyzed engaged spectatorship by creating moments of indistinction between reality and fiction. Christian Biet argues that, because that there were not clearly demarcated framing devices and the division between reality and fiction was porous (xxxiii), the spectator felt called to judge, witness, and intervene in viscerally, spectacularly violent crimes committed onstage. Spectators momentarily conflated the represented scene of suffering with a real one, and yet also understood the theatrical space as existing in a remove:

> La mise en spectacle du meurtre, du viol et du sang contribuerait donc d'abord, dans ce théâtre en constitution, à une interrogation sur la représentation et sur ses limites, sur la mimesis comme imitation presque parfait du réel, afin que le spectateur soit saisi par l'analogie transparente et ne sache finalement plus très bien s'il assiste à la mise en scène d'un œuvre d'art ou à une véritable action sanglante (xxxii) [31]

Caught in the paradox of witnessing what momentarily appeared to be an actual crime it could not prevent, this audience was further galvanized in moments in which it was directly interpolated by characters onstage. Biet cites the example of the moment in the play *Scédase* in which the judge asks whether anyone witnessed the double rape and

[31] For more work in this area, see Enders, *Medieval Theater of Cruelty*.

murder onstage without intervening as a moment in which audience members would have felt implicated in the scene onstage, and yet, because they would have recognized the limits of dramatic illusion, would have understood that they could not intervene:

> Le spectateur est tout à la fois convoqué et refusé puisque tout se déroule sur un autre plan de réalité. L'unique témoin voit tout et ne peut que rester muet: la fiction tragique le renvoie, non sans culpabilité, à son impuissance et à son infinie distance de la scène (340)

In several descriptions of late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century drama, Biet highlights the absence of ethical witnesses onstage, positing that this present absence challenged the audience to be ethically engaged. He does so in his discussion of *Scédase* cited above as well as in plays in which bad figures for the spectator were included. For example, in his "Notice" to the 1571 *Tragédie à huit personnes*, Biet argues that Bretog renders the immediacy of the action onstage not only by choosing a contemporary setting easily relatable for the average spectator, but by portraying "bad" spectators onstage, who chat amongst themselves idly while the criminal hangs to death (7-9). These bad spectators reflect what Biet considers to be an inverse image of normative contemporary viewing practices by not being emotionally or intellectually involved in the scene of suffering presented for their edification. They made no effort to see the connection between the criminal and themselves, or to learn from what they were watching. Biet's formulation revalorizes the graphic spectacularity of early seventeenth-century theater. However, there are limits, as my introduction argues. When the king interpolated the audience, they may feel implicated in the action. But, in these instances, the king was deflecting from his own inability to intervene in the judicial crisis and act in an ethical

way. This interpolation puts the onus of appropriate action on spectators who have just been traumatized at the sight of stage rapes and murders they were powerless to stop.

Later plays did not use violence to redirect away from the encounter between victim and tyrant. They used framing devices to manage the scene of violence or to push it off the stage entirely. As I will show, they used women to figure indirectly the suffering of victims of state violence in order to lessen the impact of this gruesome scene and keep people from making connections between the action onstage and their own lives.

Spectatorship changed dramatically over the course of the seventeenth century, becoming increasingly disconnected from the action onstage. Part of this shift is reflected in concrete alterations of the physical space of the theater. The permanent proscenium arch, clearly demarcating real and theatrical space, debuted in France in 1641 as a means of rendering the new backdrop-style set more believable.[32] This shift also had to do with an association between theater and painting, in which a renewed interest in perspectival representation was evident. All of these modifications worked to maintain distance between fictional and real space and therefore limiting audience reception, identification, and interaction.

Managing the scene of violence was a major way to lessen the impact of the scene and to make people not see victims as martyrs, a politically polarizing term. In addition to *mises en abîme* and other framing devices, plays could use attending women to distance the audience from a direct engagement with the depiction of suffering. Ibbett's work on figures for the spectator in 1640s religious drama illustrates the shift towards spectator distancing and passivity with reference to changes that occurred between early and mid-

[32] See Hénin, *Théâtre dans le théâtre* and Lyons, *Kingdom of Disorder.*

to late seventeenth-century painted representations of male martyrs and attending women.[33] In devotional paintings of Saint Sébastien, attention shifted from Sainte Irène's intervention in caring for his martyred body to anonymous women passively mourning (30-32). In contemporary theater, Ibbett argues, a similar disciplining is operative: these religious dramas focus attention on docile female mourners of more illustrious male martyrs. To control audience reception better, Ibbett argues, these neoclassical plays featured characters modeling appropriate witnessing for the audience and deflecting attention from the martyr's suffering. Not only did this phenomenon enable the scene of explicit violence to be both moved offstage and conflated with the suffering of a *bienséant* passive mourner, but it also disciplined witnessing. Martyrs are witnesses who defy state power and, as victims of the same, are portrayed positively and compellingly. Martyrs were divisive figures, and were understood as such in seventeenth-century since Protestants who were killed were also called martyrs (Ibbett 34). By the 1640s, the term martyr carried resonances of both protestant and aristocratic resistance, and therefore Richelieu used this sort of play to depoliticize martyrdom and render it passive (Ibbett 42). These plays replaced a problematic witness with a docile, depoliticized one. The audience, especially the ever-dangerous aristocratic men watching, would see a more domestic sidelined role for them in the figure of mourning women (56).

Both Antigone and Mariane attend to their mourned brothers and enter the fray to defend their memory. In the later versions, they are far from docile attending women who contrast with martyrs, as Ibbett describes. They perform a kind of impersonation, taking on the qualities of their dead loved ones and thereby entering into the symbolic field of

[33] For other interpretations of female mourners in French *ancien régime* drama, see Harris and Merlin-Kajman.

political power. This phenomenon is both transgressive and normative at the same time. It blurs or problematizes stable boundaries between male/female as well as stage, wing, and audience. At the same time, the increased spectacle-ization of the wife/sister/widow's suffering body conditioned audience response, taking away from the violence occluded in the wings. Plays featuring Antigone and Mariane showcase these women performing good works and actively intervening in the theatrical performance of state power. These plays also have the advantage of approximating the religious thematics of martyr drama while remaining secular.[34] Both these characters mourn brothers, refusing to forget or be silent when state authority re-casts murder and sacrilege as lawful.

Furthermore, these plays foreground the possibility for women's transgressive agency as they take on roles as mourners, a consideration outside the scope of Ibbett's investigations. In the next section, I will trace notable shifts in the degree and kind of active female witnessing to violence in plays featuring Mariane and Antigone throughout this period. Garnier's *Antigone* and Hardy's *Mariamne* focus on the chastity of their eponymous characters. While incest is notably absent from their discourse, in other respects language had a wide scope. These plays acknowledge the concrete reality of the body and dramatize lengthy debates about tyranny. Those performed in the 1630s constitute a *moment charnière* in the history of spectatorship. Antigone and Mariane's active witnessing in these plays can be understood as modeling active and engaged spectatorship for the audience. Compared with previous versions and source texts, as well as the subsequent and more famous later plays such as Racine's *La Thébaïde*, Rotrou's

[34] For an explanation of Christian religious motifs in these plays see Abraham and Mazauer.

and l'Hermites' eponymous characters are politically active and take center stage. Their comparative degree of agency, as I will argue, derives from the combined exploitation of incest and widowhood motifs.

Women in these plays stood for men, this agency stemming from both an ethical obligation and an emotional connection. These stances are important, despite their ultimate futility. Looking at these eponymous characters, we can see the particular conditions of possibility for spectatorship before 1640. We can also trace a progressive focalization on the body of witnesses as figures for spectatorship. Ultimately, this focus created a disappearing act, in which real, dead, bodies took second place to those of their suffering mourners. This disappearing act also detracted from the experience of the spectator, who was no longer directly interpolated or empowered to intervene. To establish this thesis, I will trace how Rotrou and l'Hermite transform Garnier's *Antigone* and Hardy's *Mariamne*, amplifying the theme of incest as they dissimulate the embodied presence of the victim of state violence. These plays lend themselves to this methodology because Rotrou and l'Hermite relied so heavily on the previous generation of plays and yet made such drastic alterations.

In Garnier's *Antigone* and Hardy's *Mariamne*, this relationship with a brother is the first among many equally important intrafamilial relationships. The later versions of these plays by l'Hermite and Rotrou intensify the brother-sister dyad, turning affection into almost incestuous intensity. The earlier generation of plays did not need incestuously tinged connections between brother and sister. Displaying and then truncating scenes of confrontation was this earlier generation's means of regulating the scene of violence, redirecting terrorizing images of the fall of tyrants onto an acceptable victim. Later plays

would occasionally also use the strategy of truncating scenes of confrontation, but they did not need, and probably could not risk the scandal and multiple interpretations, of this more violent strategy. These instances were more carefully couched in more complex rhetorical strategies that posited revenge as a hypothetical, or stressed its impossibility.

Early Modern Maria(m)nes and Antigones

Alexandre Hardy's *Mariamne* presents a chaste, unhappily married queen who mourns each dead family member. In her first scene, Mariamne describes Herode as a murderous tyrant and abusive husband:

> Meurtrier de mes parents sur lesquels l'assassin
> Empiète sa Couronne exécrable larcin
> Apres avoir éteint la famille Royale (2.1.15-17)

She goes on to describe succinctly the horror of having to sleep with the murderer of her family members:

> Qu'il faille chaque nuit de fureur éperdue
> Tenir la gorge preste à mon bourreau tendue
> Recevoir les baisers du pire des humains
> Qui trempa dans le sang de mon père ses mains
> Fait mon jeune germain suffoquer dans les ondes (2.1. 41-45).

While she laments the death of brother and father greatly, the play lacks l'Hermite's version's incestuously inflected and exclusive emotional connection between siblings. It differs from l'Hermite's version in other important respects. For example, bodies and embodied experience feature prominently, and whole scenes dramatize debates on

polarizing topics such as tyranny. The play opens with Aristobule's ghost onstage, a feature of this period's drama and one staged in dramatic and grisly fashion with shrouds and painted clothing to give the impression of skeletons (Berregard 195; Vuillermoz 137-39). This ghost accuses Herode of being a tyrant:

> Monstre le plus cruel qui respire la vie
> Tyran bouffi d'orgueil & forcené d'envie
> Fléau de l'innocence horreur du genre humain
> Que fait si longuement ocieuse ta main (1.1.1-4)

He provides evidence of concrete, political crimes, including Hyrcan's murder as well as that of Aristobule (6-26). He then shouts imprecations, describing Herode's gruesome death in detail:

> Outre une fin tragique entre les plus tragiques,
> Dévoré de vermine en chaque part du corps,
> Au lieu d'une, souffrant un siècle mille morts. (1.1.30-32)

Even a spectral accusation of an archetypal tyrant would have been too problematic in theater of the 1630s. In l'Hermite's *La Mariane* the audience hears these defiant words only through Hérode's retelling of his nightmare (1.1.128). As I will show, Mariane is a glorified double that masks her brother's gruesome, disappeared body. But in this earlier generation of theater, these scenes of accusation, where the tyrant has to confront the gristly reality of his crimes, were possible, albeit truncated or spectral.

Hardy's Mariamne is not a double for her brother; instead she amplifies and seconds his voice. They are all members of the same family, and otherwise there is no exclusive tie that unites these two. She does speak with the same frankness about her

husband's political crimes against multiple relatives. She shares Aristobule's disgust for his body. Chaste though she is, Mariamne minces no words describing her marital obligations with horror: "Depuis, Hélas depuis qu'à contrecœur je sers/ D'égout aux voluptés du pire des pervers" (5.1.1339-1340). In stating that Hérode uses her body as a sewer ("d'égout") Mariamne evinces almost palpable disgust (*dégoût*). Hérode too is aware of the body's physicality, even of that of his beloved. At the end of the play, Hérode curses himself for having ordered Mariamne's execution. Though she dies offstage and no one brings her body onstage, Hérode describes how he will honor her with future ritual mourning rites. As a result of his pious efforts, he hopes her body will briefly reanimate in order to pardon him with a kiss.

> Où ce précieux corps inhumé quelquefois
> Révoquera l'esprit aux accents de ma voix,
> Consolant mes ennuis d'une douce parole,
> Permettant à mes bras d'étreindre son idole,
> À ma bouche obtenir sa piteuse merci.
> Premier que je descende au Royaume noirci, (5.1. 1700-1706)

"Idole" in this case refers to a departed loved one's dead body (Biet, *Théâtre de cruauté*, 1036). This mental image is grisly, but at least in this play Hérode recognizes that his wife is currently dead, and that his desire for her now poses a concrete logistical problem to be overcome. In Tristan l'Hermite's adaptation, the body loses its material presence. There is neither ghost onstage in Act One nor touching evocation of a dead queen in Act Five. Instead, these galvanizing moments become sublimated and redeployed in Hérode's speech.

The eponymous character in Tristan's *La Mariane* figures the rebellious, suffering body and its disappearance from the stage. She impersonates her dead brother, representing his rebellious posture onstage. In her standing for, and then becoming, the victim of state violence, the focus turns to her beautifully mournful and finally glorified body. This increased visibility is actually the sign of an erasure, that of the galvanizing, visceral, material presence of suffering bodies. Unlike the eponymous character in Hardy's play, to which Tristan is largely indebted (l'Hermite, *Introduction* 145-53), in this play Mariane focuses almost exclusively on the death of her brother instead of those of her other family members. She mentions that of her father briefly (2.1.379, 392), but repeats references to her dead brother, and their affinity for one another:

> Et l'on voyait en lui je ne sais quoid'illustre,
> Sa grâce, sa beauté, sa parole, et son port,
> Ravissaient les esprits dès le premier abord.
> Il était de mon poil, il avait mon visage,
> Il était ma peinture, ou j'étais son image. (2.1.404-408) [35]

The play demonstrates this affinity or sympathy through its depiction of an abstract, glorified body. This image links Mariane and her brother, as they share grace, beauty, speech, and visage. Hélène Merlin-Kajman goes so far as to argue that Mariane and her brother form an ideal couple, and that this identification/love relation makes her scorn her husband because this rapport is radically exogamous:

> "Il avait mon visage": concentré sur le souvenir de celui qui apparaît là comme sa vraie moitié, le visage de Marianne n'a pas d'autre "dessous" que celui de son

[35] For various interpretations of the term *je-ne-sais-quoi* during the early modern period, see Jankélévitch and Scholar.

> frère, et rien que le chagrin de sa perte ne peut plus le troubler. Hérode prescrit en vain à Soême de le sonder: double de celui d'Aristobule, le visage de Mariane n'est moins que le reflet douloureux d'un manque. (162)

Merlin-Kajman's analysis pinpoints an essential component of the play's aesthetic, and her reading of the incestuous identification between Mariane and Aristobule is especially rich. She could have strengthened her argument by placing more emphasis on Mariane's agency. Merlin-Kajman argues that Hérode murdered Aristobule out of jealousy because he perceived their incestuous connection (160-61) and that his prime motivation is frustrated love (164, note 54). If we consider instead that Hérode's prime motivation is maintaining and legitimizing his power, Mariane's incestuous connection emerges as a choice, one that alone can give form to her long-simmering rebellion. Aristobule and Mariane represent the limits of Hérode's authority, and in so doing constitute a perennial destabilizing threat from within. Hérode wishes to deny that he wrongly murdered Aristobule among many others to solidify his power. Furthermore both he and his entourage deny that any threats to his sovereignty exist, obsessively listing how he has eliminated all potential threats. His entourage clearly knows this routine by heart (1.1.8, 161-204). His nightmare is that this power is ultimately futile. Aristobule represents the murdered bodies that will not be disappeared but return to trouble the seeming stability Hérode seeks to project and maintain. It is no accident that Hérode begins his somnolent rebuke by claiming his superior ability as king to rule and maintain order: "Je suis assez savant en l'art de bien régner,/ Sans que ton vain courroux me la vienne enseigner"(1.1.5-6). He reduces the ghost's prognostications to an unnecessary lesson in introductory political science. Hérode will spend the rest of the play vainly trying to justify this over-

confident statement.

Mariane and Aristobule are a dynamic incestuous duo, challenging Hérode's precarious grasp on power. Aristobule represents a viable political threat that only increased with time and the number of executions. Hérode feared Aristobule could compel the people to proclaim him king (1.1.111-116), and his death very nearly resulted in Hérode's execution (3.2.945). The other limit to Hérode's power is Mariane's coldness to him. She alone cannot be commanded or charmed. Rather than suspecting her incestuous leanings, Hérode seems oblivious to the many ways in which Mariane choses endogamy and exits the roles inherent to the traffic of women. Hérode considers her in exogamous roles only as a link between men. He secretly ordered to have Mariane killed in the event of his death, which indicates that Hérode can conceive of Mariane only as his wife and, him being gone, only as the wife of another man. When he hears that Mariane has learned this secret information, he assumes she must be guilty of adultery, which suggests again that he sees her only as a man's object of desire and the means of power transfer between men:

> Et riant de ma mort, une méchante femme,
> Eût partagé mon sceptre avec son infâme,
> Sans cet heureux avis Hérode était perdu (4.1. 1113-1115)

In remarrying after his death, she would transfer "his" scepter, which indicates again that she is the means by which power is transferred and legitimated. This is as close as he will ever come to acknowledging that she is a legitimate heir rather than a queen consort. Mariane is also as an ideal mother of Hérode's children.

> Ces petits orphelins sont dignes de pitié,

(Elle se porte un mouchoir sur les yeux.)

Ces aimables objets de ma tendre amitié,

Qu'une rude marâtre ainsi qu'il est croyable

Maltraitera bientôt d'un air impitoyable, (3.2.875-879)

When Hérode sees her as a loving and concerned mother of his children, his heart quickly softens and he forgives her purported crimes of conspiracy and adultery:

Au point que mon courroux était le plus aigri

Par le cours de ses pleurs mon cœur s'est attendri

Il semble que l'Amour qui se rend son complice

Déchire le bandeau que porte ma justice

Afin qu'en la voyant je lui puisse accorder (3.2. 877-881).

In addition to the pure narcissism of seeing her loving a reflection of him, Hérode is able to love her again because she is behaving in an apparently normative fashion commensurate with that of a dutiful wife and mother ensuring continuity between generations.

Hérode might also interpret her tears as irresolution, further illustrating that he is narcissistic. Considering that he interprets her hatred of him in narcissistic terms as obstinacy and coldness to his love, he may believe that he can melt her heart with love. This possibility is suggested in Hérode's invocation to "Amour" in this passage. Continuing the motif from line 879, Hérode continues in this vein:

Tu demandes sa grâce Amour je te l'accorde

Mais veuille agir près d'elle et me faire accorder

Un bien qu'en même temps je lui veux demander

Fais qu'à jamais son cœur repentant de son crime

Réponde à mes bontés avec plus d'estime

Qu'elle quitte pour moi cet insolent orgueil

Qui pourrait quelque jour nous ouvrir le cercueil

Fais lui voir que je l aime à l'égal de moi même

Et s'il se peut encore Amour fais qu'elle m'aime

Il fait signe à ceux qui sont du conseil qu'ils se retirent (3.2. 884-892)

Obvious to everyone but Hérode, Mariane has already chosen her brother over her children. In her first scene onstage, she remains unmoved when her nurse Dina reminds her of her duty towards her children.

Vous verrez quelque jour vos aimables enfants

Les tiares au front, heureux et triomphants;

Au moins si par un trait de mauvaise conduite

Votre mépris ne rend leur fortune détruite,

Ne perdez pas le soin qui les doit conserver:

Si le roi vous attend il faut l'aller trouver. (2.1.461-466)

Even this evocation does not change Mariane's mind. Nor will she regret her decision later in the play, remaining resigned to the possibility of their death (3.5. 1322-1324, 1330-1332, 1335-1336). Marking a definitive break, Mariane states she has chosen to represent Hérode's crimes to him and end their physical relationship.

J'irai: mais ce sera pour lui faire paraître

Qu'il est un parricide, un scélérat, un traître,

Et que je ne sais point de loi, ni de devoir

Qui me puisse obliger désormais à le voir

Le conseil en est pris. (2.1.467-471)

This choice is decisive and puts an end to the uneasy stability that heretofore has characterized her marriage. Prior to this moment, Hérode tolerated and even loved her in her anger (2.1.523-526). The key difference here is that Mariane makes a definitive break with her husband with insolent language.

Elle m'a dit des mots si fort *injurieux*,

Que ne pouvant souffrir une telle *insolence*,

Enfin je l'ai chassée avec violence. (2.5.676-679, italics mine)

We do not learn what precisely Mariane says to her husband. We do know that her words are as provoking as those of her dead brother, and that Hérode's reaction to them both is identical. During his dream, Hérode had reacted to Aristobule's insolent words by striking him and then chasing him away:

Ses propos dès l'abord, ont été des *injures*,

Des reproches sanglants: mais tous pleins d'impostures.

[…] Bref voyant qu'il osait ainsi s'émanciper,

À la fin j'ai levé le bras pour le frapper (1.1.127-129, 133-134, italics mine)

After his dream, he awoke shouting the following:

Fantôme *injurieux* qui trouble mon repos,

Ne renouvelle plus tes *insolents* propos;

Va dans l'ombre éternelle, ombre pleine d'envie (1.1.1-3, italics mine)

Beyond the identical use of words such as *injure*, *injurieux*, and *insolence*, in both instances Hérode reacts with blinding rage and finally violent expulsion. We can

conclude that Mariane and her brother use commensurate if not identical words to provoke this reaction. The both present a once-beautiful face distorted with rage and angry words chosen to provoke violence and to represent ("faire paraître") the specter of suffering and iniquity Hérode wishes to conceal.

Mariane acts as a double in this play, but she does so as part of a deliberate, provocative strategy. In Merlin-Kajman's reading, Aristobule provokes the play's crisis, Mariane repeats it, and Hérode echoes his lament:

> Une seule *provocation* à la mort déroule ainsi la trame tragique en deça, et au-delà du discours morale et politique tenu par Marianne, qui semble disparaître pour permettre à Hérode d'entrer à son tour dans la même malédiction du chagrin furieux qu'Aristobule et elle-même. Car, particularité remarquable de la tragédie, le dénouement a lieu à l'acte IV, et tout l'acte V est consacré à la plainte d'Hérode: symétrique et inverse à celle d'Aristobule (163-64)

Merlin-Kajman's reading of this play places the emphasis on the effect of doubling across the play as a whole, positing that this effect capitalizes on and exacerbates fears about the ill-fated Valois project of a mystical *union des contraires* (154, 161). The connection she establishes between Mariane, incestuous love, and death (166) could be strengthened if we consider incest in Quilligan's terms, meaning a strategy to empower women but whose transgressive potential rendered its depiction deathlike or deadly.

The play dramatizes Mariane's choice to challenge her husband's authority as well as the limits of her agency. Just like Hérode's encounter with Aristobule, their conversation is related through Hérode's words. Many of the echoes Merlin-Kajman notes in this play result from the obsessive way in which Hérode characterizes these

conversations. Hérode's lament in Act Five, which Merlin-Kajman observes is the inverse of Aristobule's, is somewhat more complicated. However, it can be explained in a similar way.

The principle part of Hérode's lament centers on a vision or hallucination in which Mariane ascends to heaven in glory. Hérode experiences this sight after he has been told that his wife has been executed, and after he appears to deny or repress this memory several times. His glorified Mariane is a negative image of Aristobule's ghost. Their inverse relation indicates what Hérode refuses to acknowledge about the victimized bodies of state violence.

Hérode's vision of the glorified Mariane is the sign of this image's hallucinatory return. Hérode attempts to replace the undead, accusatory body with a resurrected, forgiving one. This image is an exact, inverted image of Aristobule's gristly ghost. His body bears the sign of his death. It is bloated with water and bloodied (1.2.119, 135). His dead eyes are looking up at the sky and away from Hérode: "Les flots avaient éteint la clarté de ses yeux,/ Qui s'étaient en mourant tournés devers les cieux" (1.2.121-122). Aristobule speaks out of his dead mouth (1.2.126-128). In stark contrast, Hérode's vision of Mariane is eerily beautiful, silently looking at and listening to Hérode:

Mais j'aperçois la reine, elle est dans cette nue,
On voit un tour de sang dessus sa gorge nue,
Elle s'élève au ciel pleine de majesté,
Sa grâce est augmentée ainsi que sa beauté.
Des esprits bienheureux la troupe l'environne,
L'un lui tend une palme et l'autre une couronne,

Elle tourne sur moi ses regards

Pour observer l'excès des peines que je sens.

Ô belle Mariane! Écoute ma parole (5.5.1767-1775)

Here Mariane looks down at Hérode, her bloody throat the only mention of her death. Rather than continuing Aristobule's lament, as Merlin-Kajman suggests, he is hallucinating a vision that absorbs or forecloses the disappeared, accusing suffering body.

Hérode's vision of Mariane is a profoundly self-interested hallucination and not a supernatural event. As de Lantremange demonstrates, this image of Mariane in glory lacks one key feature. Instead of raising her eyes to heaven, she looks down at Hérode. Lantremange concludes that, paired with other narcissistic features of the monologue and the lack of conversion as a result of the "vision," Hérode hallucinates this passive and silenced image of his wife (321-22). Lantremange is not the only one to observe the subjective nature of this hallucination. Muratore argues that this vision signifies that Hérode has absorbed and contained Mariane's threat to his political power (151). Muratore ultimately concludes that Mariane becomes merely an accessory in a play that establishes Hérode as a tragic figure (146, 153). Additionally, incestuous identification presented particular constraints for the female eponymous characters in plays of this period. This hallucinatory image operates as a foreclosure of violence that Hérode collapses under the strain of cognitive dissonance, unable to maintain the illusion that his beloved is in glory rather than gorily dead.

This play's *dénouement* is far more troubling than Hardy's version. Its violence is foreclosed and returns as a troubling hallucination. Merlin-Kajman does a brilliant reading in which this play's final act is seen to inflict violence upon spectators, obliging

them to replace nostalgia for the previous political regime with horror (168-171). For me, this play illustrates the process by which violent motifs became absorbed and redeployed by later classical drama. In this later iteration, the suffering body became manifest but not present, its power to galvanize the audience contained and disappeared. As a result, the denied reality of the body returns with a hallucinatory vengeance.

Even after Mariane disappears from the stage and Hérode's hallucination ends, a kind of sublimated suffering body remains. Hérode laments, fulminates, orders his people to assassinate him, and then curses them for their inaction (5.2.1589-1614). His psychological pain only increases as he comes to terms with Mariane's death. Gone are all figures of dissent, absorbed by a show-stopping, self-loathing megalomaniac. Merlin-Kajman argues that in calling for his own assassination Hérode interpolates the audience indirectly as "peuples oppressés," and she further maintains that this character forecloses the possibility of regicide in the mind of the audience (169-71). Additionally, the play offers the audience a specious, impossible tyrannicide in order to detract from Hérode's larger political crimes.

Moreover, in death Mariane is no longer brave, defiant, and rebellious but merely passively beautiful. L'Hermite excised reference to Hérode's political crimes when he adapted these lines from Hardy's play. In *Mariamne*, Herode acknowledges that his wife was the legitimate heir to the throne:

> Vengez, peuples, vengez sur les Auteurs du crime
> Celle qui vous restait de *Reine légitime*,
> *Héritière* d'Hyrcane au Sceptre Palestin (5.1.1585, italics mine)

Mariamne was the legitimate monarch in this play, but in *La Mariane* the eponymous

character is merely beautiful.

Venez, venez venger sur un tyran profane

La mort de votre belle et chaste Mariane (5.3.1603-1604)

l'Hermite's version does make a passing reference to legitimacy, but in the form of kings, making no mention of legitimate queens (5.3.1600). The text therefore avoids the discussion of whether Mariane has political authority in her own right.

The forensic language Biet so expertly defines and interprets in *Scédase* as a galvanizing force for the audience is totally absent from *La Mariane*. This play is so bound up with Hérode and his shaky grasp on power that there is almost no room for the eponymous character at all. Because of these constraints, it is all the more important to focus on Mariane's definitive choice of her brother over her husband's family. Motivated perhaps by incestuous identification, Mariane choses to "faire paraître" a provoking, nightmarish image of her husband's crimes.

Sisterly mourning in the 1630s was far more intimate and incestuously-coded than it was in previous or subsequent decades. Like Hardy's Mariamne, Garnier's Antigone lacks any incestuously inflected preference for a brother. Garnier's 1580 play presents a young, brave, and virginal eponymous character. The combination of sources emphasizes the multiple roles Antigone plays, adapting a sequence of events in which Antigone cares for a close relative. I propose a corrective to Mazour's interpretation, in which he argues that combining vignettes of Statius and Seneca serves to highlight the overall tragic fate of the extended family. These moments all show facets of Antigone and her relationality. Unlike the source texts, in this play her status derives from her kinship, and various characters repeatedly list her pedigree as daughter, sister, and niece to kings. Créon

mistakes her actions as a consequence of her elevated status, saying that she

Se rit de ma puissance, et pense volontiers
Que pour le vain respect des Rois ses devanciers,
Elle n'y soit sujette, et que la félonie
Dont elle use envers moi, lui doive être impunie.
Mais ores qu'elle soit sœur et fille de Rois,
De ma sœur engendrée en maritales lois,
Je la ferai mourir, et sa sœur avec elle,
Si je trouve sa sœur être de sa cordelle. (4.3.1846-1853)

Then later, he reiterates his stance in response to Ismène's pleading on her behalf.

ISMÈNE. Elle est fille, elle est sœur, elle est nièce de Rois.
CRÉON. Le fût-elle des Dieux, elle est sujette aux lois. (4.3.1934-5)

This affirmation is a telling exaggeration, revealing Créon does not recognize divine superiority. Finally, Hemon reiterates the many ways in which Antigone is connected to a variety of relations when he variously accuses Créon of murdering a daughter of a king, Hemon's future wife, and Créon's own niece:

Une fille de Roi, mon épouse future!
Votre nièce, cruel, que vous dussiez chérir
Ainsi que votre fille, et la faites mourir! (4.4. 2277-2279)

Antigone derives her agency from her continued efforts, on behalf of multiple members of her family, to restore peace and order and maintain family unity. But the play also resists any reading of Antigone as incestuous and otherwise circumscribes other

potentially transgressive aspects of her personality. Here Antigone acts as the homosocial bond between multiple members of her family. Consequentially, while she is certainly an active, engaged spectator, her role is comparatively circumscribed. She has a wide network of familial attachments, attending her father, mother, and both brothers without preference. Garnier changes his source text to make it clear that Antigone would perform funeral rites for either brother without preference, eliding the incestuous bond in his source text in favor of normative family piety.

The play opens with Antigone consoling her blind father Edipe in his wilderness retreat. Isolated and world-weary, he depends on her alone for sustenance, guidance, and companionship (1.1-11, 391-400). Instead of passively witnessing his suffering, she exhorts her father to overcome his guilt and despair, unmoved by the horrifying vision of parricide that haunts him:

> EDIPE. Las! pourquoi me tiens-tu? Ma fille: et vois-tu pas
> que mon père m'appelle et m'attire au trépas?
> Comme il se montre à moi terrible, épouvantable?
> Comme il me suit toujours et m'est inséparable?
> Il me montre sa plaie, et le sang jaillissant
> Contre ma fière main, qui l'alla meurtrissant.
> ANTIGONE. Domptez, mon géniteur, cette douleur amère. (1.1.39-45)

In stark contrast to Edipe, who describes himself as being stained with both the blood of his father's murder and the guilt of incest, Antigone is presented as miraculously pure and untainted by parricide, incestuous origins, or the suggestion of sexuality

> EDIPE. […] Penses-tu qu'il me reste

Encore un parricide, et encore un inceste?

J'en ai peur, j'en ai peur, ma fille laisse-moi:

Le crime maternel me fait craindre pour toi.

ANTIGONE. Ne me commandez point que je vous abandonne,

Je ne vous laisserai pour crainte de personne: (1.1.49-53)

Antigone disregards a clear reference to father-daughter incest, stating merely that she fears no one and that she refuses to leave her father's side. This denial is a bizarre overcompensation for the preponderance of the incestuous Oedipus/Antigone dyad that according to Quilligan informed early modern theater (9, 231, 234). The rest of the scene, as well as the rest of the play, continues to elide or foreclose the possibility of incest, at times deflecting its potential figuration onto other characters. For Edipe, for example, it is a miracle that Antigone is so virtuous, given that she was the product of an incestuous union

O la grande vertu! Bons Dieux! Me peut-il faire

Que j'ai onques engendré sille si débonnaire?

Ce peut-il faire hélas ! Qu'un lit incestueux

Ait pu jamais produire enfant si vertueux? (1.1.85-88)

In this manner, Garnier seems to take great pains to demonstrate that Antigone has no incestuous attachment to her brother Polynice. In the play's first scene, Antigone states that she would abandon both of her brothers to care for her ailing father (1.1.401-402). During her trial by Creon, she adamantly insists that she would have buried her other brother Eteocle had it been necessary (4.2.1877-1879), a formulation that significantly alters the sense of the source text. Referring to her brothers in the plural demonstrates she

is not guilty of either partiality or incestuous desire. In proliferating these accessory roles, Garnier diminishes the singularly powerful connection to her brother.[36]

Beyond restricting the transgressive potential of Antigone's rapport with her brother and other family members, Garnier also renders her a more passive observer of the action of the play. Antigone helps her mother plan her intervention into family politics only after her father's blessing. The eponymous character implicates herself in this potentially divisive action, but only after receiving her father's authorization. Moreover, she defers to her mother, encouraging her to take center stage and move her children to make peace with a display of maternal suffering: "allons, Madame, allons vos maternelles larmes/ De leurs guerrières mains feront tomber les armes" (2.1.502-503). That her mother's tears would have the greater efficacy is not surprising, but it illustrates my observation that Antigone plays a series of accessory roles to multiple family members. The result is a rendering of this figure as a comparatively passive spectator in the action of the play.

And yet, Antigone is certainly an agent in this play. She buries her brother twice, and bravely stands trial as a result. However, compared with either Sophocles' or Rotrou's versions, she is relatively passive in that she does not volunteer information. In the critical trial scene, she waits patiently while the guard describes the circumstances of her being surprised, an account lasting thirty-eight lines. Likely, she spends these thirty-eight lines with her head bowed and eyes looking at the ground. Créon orders her to look at him when she speaks: "Levez les yeux de terre, et ne déguisez rien" (4.2.1802). Save

[36] For greater elaboration, see Butler, *Antigone's Claim*

for one twenty-five-line soliloquy, throughout the entire scene she answers Créon's questions with short statements of a line or even less:

ANTIGONE. Il est vrai, je l'ay fait.

CRÉON . […] Ne saviez-vous pas bien

Qu'il était défendu par publique ordonnance ?

ANTIGONE. Oui, je le savais bien, j'en avais connaissance (4.2.1803-1805)

This direct admission is hardly a version of what Butler calls a contestatory "non-avowal" in Sophocles' *Antigone* (8-11). My sense is that its lack of ambiguity renders it a less rich contestatory appropriation and critique of Créon's political rhetoric. This sense is in part informed by the elision of other moments of indistinction, rendered especially in Alamanni's translation of Sophocles' text, particularly that of incest. Ultimately in Garnier's version Antigone functions as the bond between men. Strictly avoiding the language of incest, *Antigone*'s eponymous *femme forte* is pious and desexualized.

Rotrou's adaptation, compared with Garnier's version, gives Antigone a far greater degree of futile agency. This play troubles and transgresses many boundaries by implementing and layering a variety of linguistic registers which, in themselves, are perfectly *bienséants*. Her claim proximity and intimacy with her brother Polynice forms the basis for Antigone's political intervention. They are far more emotionally and physically implicated, compared with eponymous heroines in earlier plays. As I have said, in Garnier's version Antigone attends to and cares for multiple members of her family. In Rotrou's version, Antigone is more directly attached to her brother and less to her family. She takes on a more central role, achieving agency through incestuously inflected affection and identification. She is more assertive and, initially at least, more

isolated. In contrast to the other characters, the majority of which seem to wield a futile and increasingly circumscribed measure of political power, Rotrou's Antigone remains on the exterior or liminal space both spatially and politically. Her father long-dead, she does not attend her mother, but shuns interactions where she cannot argue for or talk with her brother.

As a result, Antigone performs less an accessory function than in Garnier's version. Instead, the character Ismène largely takes on this role. Her effectiveness as a witness relates directly to her (incestuous) identification and desire. There is an aesthetic of doubling that seems to render the re-presentation of Polynice more vivid through Antigone, as her body doubles for his.

Rotrou borrowed from Garnier, and makes important modifications to his text by periodically selecting other sources. Because he is so faithful to Garnier's work in general, his alterations are the more significant. Rotrou's style of adaptation and combination of these sources is a kind of amplification and contamination (Louvat 212). The larger stakes involved in choosing one source over another is a matter of debate, however it is possible, of course, that Rotrou used Garnier as a translation of Euripides and that he "le suit aussi dans ses inventions, mais c'est alors pour les faire siennes et pour les radicaliser" (215). Some those changes render the play more consistent with seventeenth-century notions of Aristotelian theatrical aesthetics (Louvat 216-17) or serve to "modernize" the play (240). But Rotrou also alters sources to emphasize Antigone's agency, and especially to concentrate multiple kinship roles into one incestuous connection with her brother.

Garnier's *Antigone* was indeed a major inspiration for fourteen out of thirty-two

scenes of Rotrou's play (Louvat 213). This work was a major source text in several of the passages I identify as illustrating a dramatic shift in the degree and kind of the eponymous character's agency. Rotrou adapts Garnier's interchange between Hemon and Antigone in Act Three in which the engaged couple express their love for one another. In reprising language from Garnier, Rotrou makes important modifications. At this moment in Garnier's text, there are pressing concerns that make Antigone's lack of enthusiasm entirely reasonable. Her brothers are dead, and Iocaste her mother has just committed suicide onstage (3.1320-1323). Her dead body, wet with blood, is still on the stage as they talk (3.1376). When she states that "mon amour est béant après la sépulture" (3.1404), she has several reasons to postpone their talk of love.

When Rotrou adapts this scene and this line in particular, he decontextualizes it. He moves it to scene four of Act One, just before the battle between Polynice and Eteocle. No one has died; no one's body is bleeding inches away from them. Antigone has a premonition that terrible things may occur, but contemplates nothing concrete. She then utters a similar line: "D'une aveugle frayeur tout le sein me remplit,/ Et me parle bien plus d'un tombeau que d'un lit" (1.4.170-173), deflecting a scene of suffering onto a vision or hallucination. It also allows Rotrou to retain the focus on Antigone's love for Polynice. In the course of their conversation, Antigone and the hapless Hémon briefly discuss several concerns, but the vast majority of their dialogue consists of a discussion of Polynice. Readily acknowledging him as the cause of the present war, Antigone is more preoccupied with her brother's safety than the danger he poses to Thèbes

Tournons donc nos pensées du côté de l'orage

Qui menace l'État d'un si proche naufrage:

Ce combat, cher Hémon, au moins s'est-il passé

Sans la mort de mon frère, ou sans qu'il soit blessé? (1.4.174-177)

This focus shifts the tenor of the scene to a lengthy discussion of Polynice and Antigone's *amitié*. In Garnier's version, Hemon consoles Antigone, offering his love as a life-affirming alternative to her grief (3 1406-1413, 1418-1424, 1428-1435, 1450-1455). In Rotrou's version, the only comfort Hémon can provide is the assurance that he spared Polynice's life in battle (1.4.178-202). Antigone simply cannot respond to Hémon's gracious, gallant, wooing tone. Hémon merely leaves her cold, compared with her favorite subject. Even though her fiancé is her first cousin, this endogamous marriage is insufficient compared with her exclusive love for her brother. Immediately after his impassioned speech, Antigone talks about her brother again, attesting to this privileged relationship:

Une étroite amitié de tous temps nous a joints,

Qui passe de bien loin cet instinct ordinaire

Par qui la sœur s'attache aux intérêts du frère;

Et, si la vérité se peut dire sans fard,

Ætéocle en mon cœur n'eut jamais tant de part:

Quoiqu'un même devoir pour tous deux m'intéresse,

J'ai toujours chéri l'autre avec plus de tendresse (1.4.209-215)

Not only does Rotrou alter his source text by having Antigone affirm her preference for one brother over the other, but in re-contextualizing the exchange between Hémon and Antigone he displaces their relationship in favor of an incestuous bond. Rotrou then reprises lines from Garnier's chorus, adapting these mournful words into a scene in which

Antigone mourns her mother and brother. This alteration is significant because Antigone becomes the chief mourner in her family and begins to draw remaining family members around her. As chief mourner, she takes on Jocaste's intercessory duties, and Ismène becomes the accessory figure. It is only when her beloved brother dies that Antigone fully withdraws back into her family circle and into the walls of the city. Antigone continues her move from the periphery to the center of the action as the play goes forward.

Rotrou's changes to Garnier's scene of accusation are also significant. In contrast to Garnier's version, as well as Alamanni's translation of Sophocles, Antigone speaks almost immediately, after Créon's address of only six lines in which he remarks on her bold, impertinent eye

Voyez quelle assurance en cet œil effronté

Quel superbe maintient et quelle égalité (4.2.1143-1144)

It is safe to imagine that Antigone does not cast her eyes demurely downwards, in contrast to Garnier's Antigone. In the next line, Antigone declares that she was taken (*prise*) rather than surprised or caught (*surprise*). In affirming she was taken, not surprised, Antigone boldly asserts that she knew she would be captured and punished. This line not only contradicts or counters Créon's language but is also diametrically opposed to the frequency with which "surprendre" describes Antigone's actions in Garnier's analogous scene (4.2.1771), as well as Alamanni's translation (158-60). In saying she was taken but not surprised, Rotrou's Antigone affirms that she would be taken and punished, a far more active and engaged intervention than Garnier's version of events.

Besides the increased centrality Rotrou provides Antigone by amplifying Garnier's text, he renders Créon more marginal by omitting key lines. For instance, in Rotrou's version, only Créon remarks that Antigone is daughter, sister, and niece of kings. In Garnier's version, it is a common trope that multiple characters use. In Rotrou's version, only Créon uses this language, during a soliloquy during his confrontation with Antigone:

> Peut-être que le rang qu'elle tint autrefois,
> Et les titres de sœur, nièce et fille de rois,
> Font à ce cœur altier douter de la menace,
> Et contre sa frayeur soutiennent son audace;
> Mais, son extraction provint-elle des cieux,
> Et se dit-elle sœur, nièce et fille des dieux,
> La justice aujourd'hui satisfera ma haine,
> Et qui l'a secondée aura part en sa peine (4.3.1200-1207)

As an effect of this restriction, Créon appears to misunderstand Antigone's defiance as stemming from her privileged place within kinship networks, rather than from her exclusive identification with and love for her brother. No one else describes her in this way, and the language suggests that Créon either cannot understand her actions, or wishes to dismiss them.

Rotrou made other important modifications by sidestepping Garnier, his major source, altogether. He diverges most significantly in moments in which Antigone takes on more agency, most notably adding and adapting material from Statius's *Thebaid*. Louvat's introduction indicates that there was no extant French translation of this work

when Rotrou composed his play, and he seems to suggest that Rotrou would have worked from an unknown Latin edition (209). Given that Louvat, following Buchetmann, argues that Rotrou used Alamanni's Italian translation of Sophocles' *Antigone* (212-213), I believe it is logical to assume Rotrou could have used Erasmo di Valvasone's 1570 translation of Statius's *Thebaid*. I will refer to this version when discussing Statius's work.[37]

Rotrou took much inspiration from Statius, as numerous scholars have observed. What has escaped critical attention is the consistent use to which Rotrou put this source. When Rotrou follows the *Thebaid* in place of Garnier, he does so during critical moments in the play that increase the focus on Antigone as an agent for change. From her pivotal exchange with Polynice, her meeting with Argie, and her defiance during the trial scene, Rotrou adapts and amplifies Statius, using it to direct attention to Antigone's body as Polynice's double.

In Statius's *Thebaid,* Antigone runs to the wall of Thebes to add her voice to her mother Jocaste's lengthy invective (9.89-97). Valvasone's translation emphasizes that Antigone speaks just after her:

> Cosi la madre: e Antigone fra tanto,
>
> (Ne la ritien l'esser donzella) corre
>
> Sul muro, e alcun non se n'avide in tan (9. 98. 1-3)

Rotrou adapts these lines, highlighting Antigone's comparative isolation from the other members of her family. In Rotrou's play, Antigone speaks with her brother alone and hurriedly leaves after other family members arrive (2.2.427). Not only is Antigone more

[37] For a somewhat more lengthy discussion of this translation as a possible source, see Buchetmann, especially 17, 142, and 145

removed from other members of her family, but her dialogue with her brother becomes more intimate. In contrast to Statius's version, that of Rotrou emphasizes the close emotional bond between the siblings. In Statius's *La Thebaid*, Antigone reproves her brother at length for his excessive anger and the unjust violent means by which he comes to claim the throne.

> Ferma, o fratel, ferma quest'arme, & l'ira
> Reprimi un poco dentro il cor, se puoi:
> Rivolgi gli occhi a questa torre, & mira
> Se tu conosci gli aversari tuoi,
> Dunque al ritorno in tal modo s'aspira?
> Cosi dimandi I patti, il regno, & noi?
> Cosi la causa tua tratti, & difendi
> Buon foruscito? & tal giustitia attendi? (9.100.1-8)

Only then does she briefly discuss her feelings; how she has missed him, and her worries that they will never see one another alive again:

> Ti pregano ambedue con pari affetto
> Gli essercici a pieta comossi: & quella
> Condannata a patir l'empio disetto
> De' padri, & de'fratei la sorte fella;
> Quell'Antigone al Re gia si sospetto,
> Ne d'altri homoai, che sol di te sorella,
> Quella'nfelice anco ti prega; o crudo
> Fammiti almen veder co'l volto ignudo

Fa, che sense elmo I'ti riveggia almeno

Questa volta, che sores ultima sia; (11. 102, 103. 1-2)

In Rotrou's play, when Antigone addresses her brother Polynice from the walls of Thèbes in Act Two scene two, she primarily speaks in the name of their close emotional bond:

Polynice, avancez, portez ici la vue,

Souffrez qu'après un an votre sœur vous salue.

Malheureuse, hé Pourquoi ne le puis-je autrement?

Quel destin entre nous met cet éloignement?

Après un si long temps, la sœur revoit son frère

Et ne lui peut donner le salut ordinaire,

Un seul embrassement ne nous est pas permis,

Nous parlons séparez comme deux ennemis. (2.2.333-350)

She only then mentions the incongruity of his attacking his own people:

Est-ce de la façon qu'on demande ses droits?

Était-il d'un bon frère, et d'un prince modeste,

De paraitre d'abord en cet état funeste,

Et de fouler aux pieds, sur un simple refus,

Tout respect de nature, et ne l'écouter plus? (2.2.358-362)

And then she implores him to overcome his anger, once again appealing to his emotions:

Au nom d'Argie, encore, que j'aime et que je plains,

Voyant qu'on lui prépare un si proche veuvage,

Au nom d'Adraste, enfin, domptés ce grand courage (2.2.365-368)

Finally, as a last resort, she appeals to the special connection they have as brother and sister:

Hé quoi! Cette amitié, qui naquit avec nous,
De qui, non sans raison, Ætéocle est jaloux,
Et par qui je vois bien que je lui suis suspecte,
Ne pouvant l'honorer comme je vous respecte;
Cette tendre amitié reçoit donc un refus (2.2.397-400)

Antigone's intervention is, of course, a failure. More surprisingly, Rotrou "contaminates" his sources in such a way as to isolate Antigone from other members of her family and concentrate a maximum amount of attention and intention toward her favorite brother.

Rotrou also modifies his source to hint at the central importance of Antigone and Polynice's bodily presence and similarity as well as at a powerful affective connection. In Statius's version, Polynice hesitates, influenced by Antigone's lengthy speech:

Gia cominciato a si giusto lament
Polinice a depor l'orgologlio havea:
Et gia (benche Megera ostasse lento)
Molto piu l'hasta, e'l buon destrier movea (11.106.1-4)

In transforming this speech into a dialogue, Rotrou appears to have eliminated this hesitation, giving only the most resolute and defiant replies to Polynice. The scene ends with Polynice's, unwavering conviction (2.2.423-426). However, later in the play Antigone claims that Polynice was on the verge of throwing down his weapons when Ætéocle arrived on the scene at the wrong moment:

Hélas! il consultait de mettre bas les armes;

Et déjà son courroux était presque amorti,

Mais si mal à propos Ætéocle est sorti

Qu'il m'a ravi le temps. (3.7.1010-1013)

This passage appears to contradict Rotrou's own play. Is Antigone fooling herself about the degree of influence she had over her brother? Her flight from the scene immediately after Ætéocle arrives in Act Two scene three suggests she would not have had time to assess the situation. None of Polynice's haughty words in the previous scene would lead to this conclusion. However, Antigone's words are a summary of Polynice's body language, not his words in Statius's *Thebaid*:

Gia l'elmo del sui duol deva argomento

Che il gran pianto celar piu non potea:

Gia d'esser giunto, & di tornar s'arrosse

Ou altri mai di cio imputer il possa (11.106.5-8)

Antigone has been reading Polynice's body language, not his words, and she remembered this image long after the events in question transpired. Her reading of events points to the body language that the text cannot convey. It is clear, however, that she is singularly invested in his affect. Studying how Rotrou reprises the analogous lines in Statius's *Thebaid* demonstrates that Antigone focuses on Polynice's body and its nonverbal communication belied by his defiant words. As his double, she has a unique connection that allows her to gain insight into his mind's inner workings. As a contrast, Jocaste in the subsequent scene not only utterly fails to prevent the duel but actively intensifies their dispute (2.4.511-514). Not even offering her maternal "flanc" and blood as an alternative to their killing one another is effective (2.4.454-469). It is only Antigone's visage that

has a kind of temporary calmative effect.

Rotrou adapts Statius's text in other moments that feature bodies. In these instances, Antigone's body comes to stand for that of Polynice. For instance, in Act Three scene seven, Antigone and Argie meet when they both look for Polynice's body. The very moment Argie invokes Polynice's *mânes*, asking that his spirit appear to her, Antigone emerges instead.

Et toi, mon cher époux, s'il reste après les morts
Quelques mânes errants alentour de leurs corps,
Guide-moi par les tiens à ce funeste office,
Que Polynice m'aide à trouver Polynice;
C'est toi seul que je cherche en ces funestes lieux,
Daigne, encore une fois, te montrer à mes yeux (3.6.949-954)

Then immediately following this address her attendant Menette observes Antigone coming from the shadows (3.7.955-956). Immediately, Argie recognizes Antigone as her husband's image or double:

Au défaut de l'objet, son image, contente,
Encore vois-je de lui quelque chose vivante:
Vos corps furent formez dedans un même flanc,
Vous ne fustes qu'un cœur, et qu'une âme, et qu'un sang. (3.7.987-990)

Adding in lines from Statius' version is important not only because, as Louvat argues, it allows Argie and Antigone to become mirror images of one another (203), but also because Argie's recognizing Antigone as a living image of her brother further confirms her as a double of Polynice.

In Statius's version, Polynice's cloak serves as his double. Argie finds her husband because Juno orders the Moon goddess Cynthia to send a beam of light to show her where his bloodied cloak is:

Cinthia a quell dit rottosi il fofco Avanti;
Si monstro fuor con tuttp l'orbe pieno:
Et tremar l'ombre al buio usate inanti
Colte in mezzo a quel novo almo sereno
Et de le stelle sisse, & de l'erranti
Al maggior lampo i lampi venner meno:
Ne poteo non chiar il viso churno
L'abbagliata anco figlia di Saterno

Gia d'interno Argia le ciglia, e scopre
Non lontana de se giacer la vesta,
Ch'al suo marito haveva elle con opre,
Pur la conosce, e quandro altra, che questa
Parte di lui piu ritrouvar non crede,
Et, o Dei, spessogrida, ecco lo vede (12.92-93)

Antigone only appears on the scene twelve octaves later (12.105). Statius's version places more importance on the bloody and rent cloak as a synecdoche for Polynice. Not only a beautiful symbol of royalty, the gold of which would have shown in the moonlight, this cloak had been handmade by Argie. She is as familiar with it as she is with her dead husband, and it serves as a kind of *image* of Polynice that stands in for the

objet she searches for.

In the next few lines, Rotrou intensifies the language Statius's text uses to describe the singular importance Antigone had for Polynice.

Ti giuro

Ch'egli mai tanto a cor ne le vietate

Contrade, o il regno nel suo essillio duro,

Ne de la madre il dolce effetto haveva,

Quanto te sola haver sembre soleva

Di te parlava, e'l di, & la nocte intera

Ne la bocca havea Antigone, e nel core:

Et io medesma affai piu facil gli era

Da lasciar, & minor cura, & amore (12.118.119.1-4)

In Rotrou's text, instead of merely stating that Polynice loved her less, Argie adds, in a chiasmatic phrase that reveals the primacy of the Antigone-Polynice dyad, that Antigone was Polynice's wife:

Et non sans que mon cœur en fût un peu jaloux:

Car, à voir quelle part nous avions en son âme,

Je paraissais sa sœur, et vous sembliez sa femme. (3.7.1000-1003)

Argie goes so far as to describe the intense, seemingly incestuous love as a kind of marriage. This chiasmus echoes another: "Que Polynice m'aide à trouver Polynice" (3.6.954), an address intended for her husband but which conjured, as if by magic, his sororal double. Antigone is a more beautiful, glorious version of Polynice's bloodied

cloak which ultimately elides the violence done to his body.

Rotrou's Antigone has a uniquely close emotional connection and physical resemblance with her brother. She is thus able to stand for her brother in both senses of the word. But she, and her important task, are eclipsed in the final scene. Whereas in Garnier's *Antigone* Créon ultimately recognizes his crimes against Polynice and Antigone, as well as the latter's virtuous endeavor, (5.2634-2639), in Rotrou's version she is simply a beautiful, dead body conveniently silent. Hémon describes their eternal love, not her illustrious action or Créon's crimes against Polynice (5.3.1725-1746, 5.9.1675-1783). Créon's many crimes are consolidated into her death, which decontextualizes it from the larger political statement she made about the limits of human authority. It is in this death, however, that the affective connections and physical resemblance which allowed her to stand for her brother are lost. Antigone acts as a kind of widow; Polynice was only alive as long as she lived. This is the seventeenth-century glass ceiling of female agency. Like Mariane, Antigone becomes a silent dead body whose situation-specific, indirect, political intervention is written out of the story or forgotten.

This is why Rotrou's choice to transform Statius's cloth as signifier for the dead Polynice into the figure of Antigone is so significant. Antigone took on this function because she in essence used her body as a prop to signify the dead Polynice. Her act to commemorate her brother is precisely the kind of emotional labor Quilligan describes when she discusses the production and exchange of clothing between women:

> Weiner makes clear that cloth is a particularly appropriate possession for figuring the ligatures of generational connectedness. Not only is cloth a typical production

> of women throughout human history, it is, in its specific physical nature, an apt symbol for the interweave of social connections (24)

Argie immediately recognizes Antigone not because she is merely a body to her. Instead, in addition to the physical resemblance, she recognizes her loving handiwork in Antigone's commemorative act. Argie is also the only one to see the unique tie that binds Antigone to Polynice.

Conclusion

Plays featuring sisterly mourning between 1580 and 1637 presented eponymous characters who were not afraid to interrupt the ceremonial of power and act on behalf of dead brothers. Though their efforts were in vain, study of these plays bring to light two important things. First, these plays show the possibilities and the limits of active political engagement, especially for women. They also show a successive disappearance of figuration of violence from the stage. This is especially clear in comparison with earlier drama by Garnier and Hardy, where sisters defended all members of their immediate family without preference and act in concert with other figures, though their voices were the most strident. In later dramas by Rotrou and l'Hermite, the eponymous characters re-centered the action of the plays around their incestuously tinged over-identification with their deceased brothers. They presented their version of mourning for their absent loved ones by highlighting their physical and psychological similarities with the deceased. Ultimately such an arrangement resulted in an increased focalization on their bodies and led to their subsequent depersonalization, as well as a successive move away from dramatizing political contestation and the realities of state violence. In linking these two

generations of tragedy, I provide a corrective to an often implied narrative about the way in which theater's reception, especially that of violence, was circumscribed.

Conclusion : Beyond The Tragic Stage

> Vatel attend quelque temps; les autres pourvoyeurs ne vinrent point; sa tête s'échauffait; il crut qu'il n'aurait point d'autre marée; il trouva Gourville, il lui dit; "Monsieur je ne survivrai point à cet affront-ci." Gourville se moqua de lui. Vatel monte à sa chambre, met son épée contre la porte, et se la passe au travers du cœur; mais ce ne fut qu'au troisième coup car il s'en donna deux qui n'étaient pas mortels; il tombe mort. La marée cependant arrive de tous côtés; on cherche Vatel pour la distribuer, on va à sa chambre, on heurte on enfonce la porte, on le trouve noyé dans son sang, on court à M le Prince qui fut au désespoir. Monsieur le Duc pleura c'était sur Vatel que tournait tout son voyage de Bourgogne. Monsieur le Prince le dit au Roi Fort tristement on dit que c'était à force d'avoir de l'honneur à sa manière, on le loua fort, on loua et blâma son courage (Sévigné 126).

Mme de Sévigné's account of François Vatel's suicide reads like a tragedy. Gourville serves as the bumbling interlocutor who dismisses Vatel's derangement as histrionics. A series of miscommunications have fatal consequences. Vatel, in true neoclassical fashion, withdraws from the public eye to stab himself. In one sense, Vatel's actions are histrionic in the sense that he alone acts as if he were a character in a tragedy. He misconstrues the evening as a series of crises and mistakenly believes, his honor on the line, that his suicide could redeem him. In another, more telling sense, other individuals seem to react as if they were also characters in a tragedy. They praise and blame his courage. They claim he acted out of a kind of sense of honor. This kind of praise, even studded with qualifiers, indicates that the glorification of pain as a means of purging honor was not confined to the genre of tragedy or to drama itself. The erroneous belief that pain

performs useful work is deep-seated part of western culture.

This phenomenon is so deep-seated as to be unintelligible, which is why in the film *Vatel* a secret, doomed romance partially explains Vatel's despair. It may also explain why women are a convenient scapegoat to explain the actions of Elliot Roger and the like. When mental illness and narratives about the futile agency of violence converge, their victim-blaming vanishing point is frequently women.

This dissertation has considered three very different but related modes of the aesthetic of violence. They are the most repeatedly used tools to dramatize bodily suffering as a fated, divinely inspired phenomenon. I chose to organize the chapters around these different motifs and demonstrate continuity through a period of change. I begin with a chapter on daggers because Scarry's weapon/tool distinction is so readily applicable, showing us how pain is elided into the sign systems of power. Retributive or suicidal violence also followed the logic of torture because it was such a basic part of the culture of pain. Bloody cloth as a motif of violence is harder to unpack. Caesar's toga has served as an important model. Following Merlin-Kajman, I analyze it as an effigy that controls mourning and glorifies body even when it showed indexical signs of gory violence. In the right hands, this object had potent rhetorical power and could be a decorous way to catalyze further violence or conceal vulnerability and rupture that death signifies. While the first two chapters deal with stage props and the third women, women are not objects. Women were characters who use their bodies, affect, and speech as tools in the same way that characters of all genders used daggers and bloody cloth. They used them to represent the violence done to dead bodies in a still-living, dynamic image of the dead. We know this because, once dead, these women no longer control the narrative

their bodies form a part of, and they become a fungible symbol. And, crucially, in all these chapters, characters used these tools as a means to achieve agency. Characters also frequently claimed to act on behalf of something else, be it what daggers wanted them to do or what blood required of them. Achieving agency indirectly in this way is not a uniquely female trait.

Of course, indirect agency is not the whole function of these motifs of violence. All of them transform the scene of violence from gore to glory, eliding suffering and creating a convincing narrative about the use value of suffering without describing the harrowing experience of it. Part of my project has been to understand the transformation these objects of study underwent over the course of a period of aesthetic change. Stabbing is associated with a consistently greater degree of explicit violence throughout the period, until it became a kind of lesser, imperfect means of resolution in later tragedies such as *Le Cid* and in pastoral drama. Frequently in these earlier plays, blood was a catalyzer for violence. Blood stuck to objects, imbuing people and objects alike with guilt or marking them out as future sacrifices. But over this period, it transformed into bloody cloth and signified a decorous glorified image. The aesthetic of violence in the third chapter, where sisters stood for their dead brothers, served to increasingly deny the reality of death and its implications by means of an increased emphasis in later plays on the beauty of the dead woman. The body is less viscerally present in later versions of these plays and the reality of their deaths, and their brothers' is less obvious. Over the period, these women went from beautifully pious members of powerful families to simply beautiful. Simultaneous with the larger trend during this period toward less explicit drama, the suffering body also began to take its exit from the stage. However,

violence in this new form still had the coercive force to shape thought, as we have seen in numerous examples such as the terrorizing cognitive dissonance in *La Marianne* and the sacrificial crisis of blood in *Pyrame et Thisbé* as well as innumerable examples of unsheathed daggers lowly commoners pointed at themselves at the end of short, heated arguments with their social betters.

This period's aesthetic changed in numerous important ways. And yet, this transformation was successful because at the heart of this aesthetic, even at its most gory, was instrumetalization. Daggers instrumentalized violence by placing it in a narrative about the use value and necessity of sacrifice, and by couching a wide variety of retributive violent acts in sacrificial terms. Blood and bloody cloth instrumentalized violence because spilled blood became an index of either heroic acts or dishonor. Dishonorable blood attached to the guilty and catalyzed violence. Using this motif, characters depersonalized interpersonal conflict and made stabbing seem like a necessity. And, even in early plays with other instances of gory violence, women acting on their behalf re-centered the action around their contestatory stance. In doing so, these plays instrumentalized violence by foregrounding futile agency doomed to catastrophic, but illustrious, failure.

These plays instrumentalized because they placed these objects within a narrative in which inflicting pain brought agency. The ideology of pain, deep-seated in western culture that it is, needs to be dramatized convincingly, and the objects I treat in each chapter do so particularly well. Bodies, bloody cloth, and daggers are powerful tools when possessed by the right people. Bloody cloth was a particularly flexible symbol of glorified pain. Because it was contiguous with but detachable from the suffering body, it

could be reinterpreted at will by many people who were not eyewitnesses. Women's contestatory stances were interpreted so poorly by other characters because the agency these women achieved was not decipherable for them. It was partially legible while they were living but when they lost possession of their bodies they no longer held control of the narrative. While plays generally did not problematize the place in the narrative of glorified pain that daggers formed a part of, in the case of *Pyrame et Thisbé*, when the dagger passes from the dead Pyrame to the soon-to-be-dead Thisbé. Pyrame attributes the power to kill to the dagger, claiming it is the lightening and thunder and death he has been seeking. Thisbé attributes it her guilt to it in a harangue normally reserved for bloodthirsty monsters, as if to excite its hatred so it will murder her too. In all of these instances, these stage objects are active in a narrative about the utility of pain, the self-possession required to solicit death, and the fiction that weapons are agents rather than implements.

This narrative elides the catastrophic, world-destroying reality of pain and the vulnerability it elicits. Daggers were used in rituals that purported to purge and purify through pain. Instead, they denied the reality of pain, even in their most graphic moments. Bloody cloths covered gory bodies. They could amplify the scene of suffering but they also rendered it less gory. With sisterly mourning, no one denied the vulnerability of the dead brothers, but these women did seem to cloak the trauma of loss. For example, Hérode tries to deny the reality of his wife's death and in so doing is confronted with an inverted image of his dead brother-in-law. Antigone emerges at the every moment when Polynice's body is being looked for. For the period in question, these plays are unusually decorous. And, in all of these instances, the attention these

characters elicit in their defiant stances that stress their invulnerability and stoic determination hide the ways in which these stage objects construct sovereign inviolability.

When we consider these elements working in concert, we see that they build on one another, creating a strong sense of doom, making pain seem fated, useful, and divinely inspired, and reinforcing a narrative in which defiance is guaranteed to be ruinous only for the rebellious subject. Violence returned to the stage again and again in these plays. It also had the effect of showing more clichés of bodily suffering, seemingly giving more but ultimately not revealing the real experience of pain.

For example, in Rotrou's *Antigone*, in addition to the sisterly mourning I analyzed in Chapter Three, the figure of bloody cloth as well as sacrificial stabbing function as key motifs that catalyze violence. We can even see these objects imbricated in one another. As I have previously described, Rotrou transformed the bloody cloak in Statius's original into the mourning figure of Antigone in order to strengthen the physical brother-sister resemblance, their strong affective connection, and to indicate that, like garment and person, they share the same *habitus*. Antigone uses her body, gestures, and speech to figure her brother's dead body in a far more vivid way than bloody cloth can. And yet, by the end of the play, she is reduced once again to bloody, inanimate cloth. When Ismène laments over Antigone's dead body, she does a rudimentary blood spatter pattern analysis, indicating Antigone as the illustrious, courageous origin and tracing its trajectory to her fearful, inadequate form: "Le sang qu'elle a versé l'embellit et me tache/ Il l'a peint généreuse et me témoigne lâche"(5.8.22-23). Ismène is splashed as a mere bystander and marked out as such. Antigone is silently beautiful because she has once

again manifested her stoic defiance. This blood is not just a physical thing, but an index of an appropriately heroic and virtuous behavior that leaves a trace that can be read. At the same time, this is the moment when Antigone loses control over her own narrative. A mere bloody cloth, she requires an interpreter to make sense of the gory scene. This moment is also when contestatory female agency leaves the stage. Antigone combined defiant rebel and concerned sister in one body. After her death, this dual function is split into passive sister Ismène and newly radicalized Hémon. While Antigone's stabbing occurred offstage, Hémon stabs himself in front of his father in a horrifyingly graphic suicide that is also an act of political sabotage in a political system in which bloodline determined succession. As defiant as Antigone was, Hémon as suicidal sole heir absolutely steals this scene in a way she could not:

> Voyez lion régnant affamé de carnages
> Inhumain cœur humain, voilà de vos ouvrages
> Saoulez ce naturel aux meurtres acharné
> Tenez, voilà le sang que vous m'avez donné
> Ce corps qui fut à vous reste en votre puissance
> Et vous va par sa mort payer de sa naissance (5.9.9-13)

His act is both a continuation of the sacrificial crisis Antigone embodied for such a significant portion of the action and an amplification. He too hits a limit and his actions are just as futile as hers, however. Even as he sabotages his father's rule by destroying succession, he has to put vengeance into the hands of the gods and claims to hope it will not occur:

> La race de Python ne cessera qu'en vous

C est sur vous que du Ciel doit tomber le courroux

Mais puissent être vains les maux qu'il vous prépare

Qu'il vous soit aussi doux que vous m'êtes barbare

A ma fureur encore quelque respect est joint

Et je serai content qu'il ne me venge point (5.9.22-28)

Hémon, like Antigone, discovers that his agency is futile, limited, and fatal when accusing a tyrant. Though Hémon, like Antigone, employs the tools of the weak, his resistance is at least decipherable. Créon immediately recognized both the rationale for his son's actions and their fatal implications. In true abusive form, Créon co-opts the language of victimhood as s kind of counter-attack:

Barbare achève donc achève ton dessein

Le coup est imparfait s'il ne passe en mon sein

Et tu ne meurs pas tout si le jour me demeure (5.9.14-16)

This incendiary language emerges in these places when victims incite rapists, murders, and tyrants to further violence. Créon recognizes the seriousness of his heir's suicide, but only tardily, and partially, does he acknowledge his role in it: "Ô mort joins mon trépas aux effets de ma rage/ Sors mon âme et mets fin à ce tragique ouvrage" (5.9.33-34). Antigone's actions and motivations remain largely indecipherable. In an ultimate gesture of stoic self-sufficiency, Hémon lays claim to Antigone with his dying breath:

Toi qui me fus ravie aussi tôt que donnée

Vertueuse beauté, princesse infortunée!

Allons unis d'esprit sans commerce de corps

Achever notre hymen en l'empire des morts (5.9.29-32).

It is safe to say that Antigone had no strong positive feelings about spending eternity with her betrothed, and that reducing her death to misfortune writes her agency out of the story. The task of unpacking Antigone's contestatory stance requires that we recognize how it is both similar to those of other characters and radically different. Both men and women can defy authority, even though the only way to do so is to reduce themselves first to bare life, then to inanimate objects. Hémon can use his body as a weapon just as well as Antigone can. Antigone can use a dagger to carve out a place for herself with the same stoic detachment. And yet, because her power came from re-presenting the disappeared dead body of her brother, Antigone's body has no direct political impact and she is reduced to a merely beautiful corpse upon her death. Women's agency is therefore the strongest example of the ultimate futility of the contestatory stances described in this dissertation. The terrorizing force in the plays I have analyzed came from depicting a whole series of failed defiant acts only possible through the death of the subject and whose success was ultimately undermined or rendered questionable.

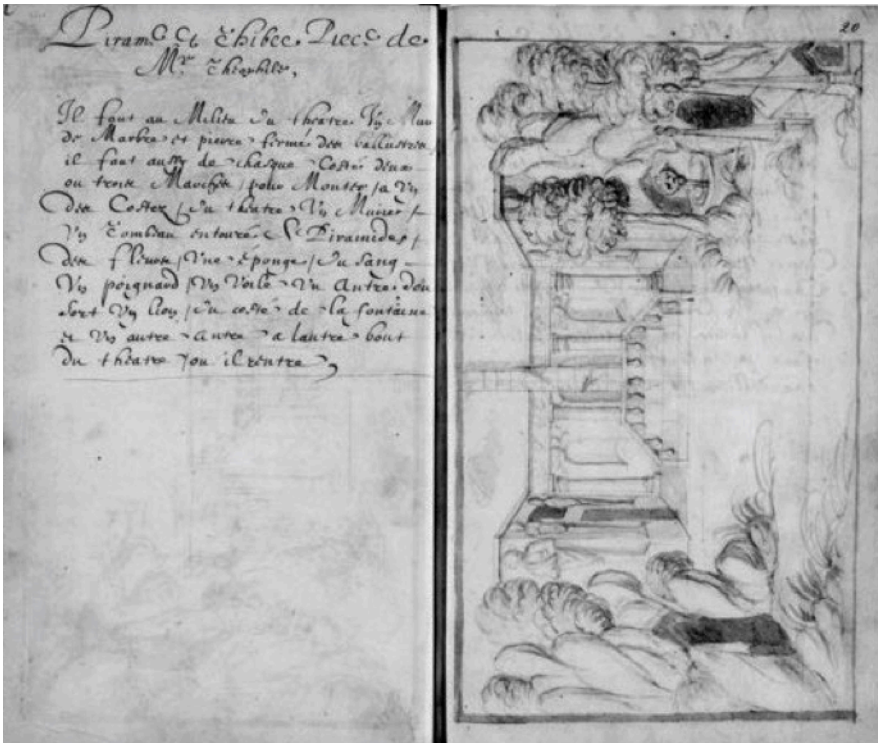

Fig. 1 *Mémoire pour la décoration des pièces qui se représentent par les Comédiens du Roy, entretenus de Sa Majesté... commencé par Laurent Mahelot et continué par Michel Laurent, en l'année 1673 »*. 1601. Web. 12 July 2012.

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